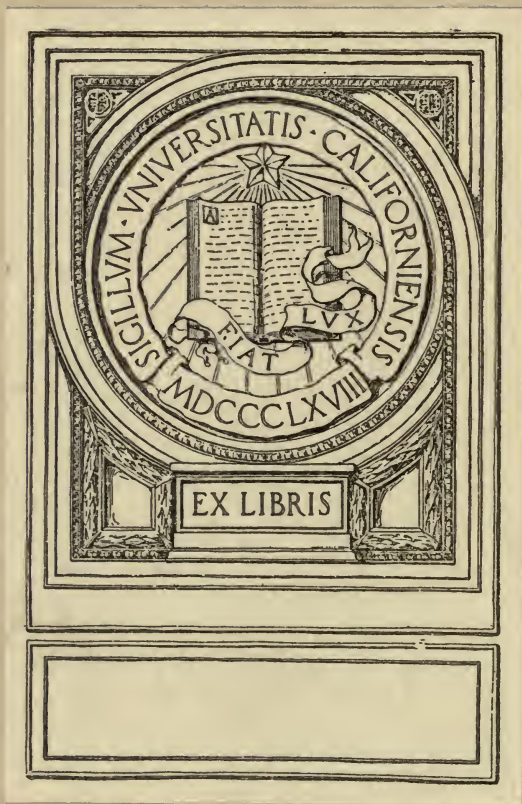


# SOCIALISM

## AN ANALYSIS

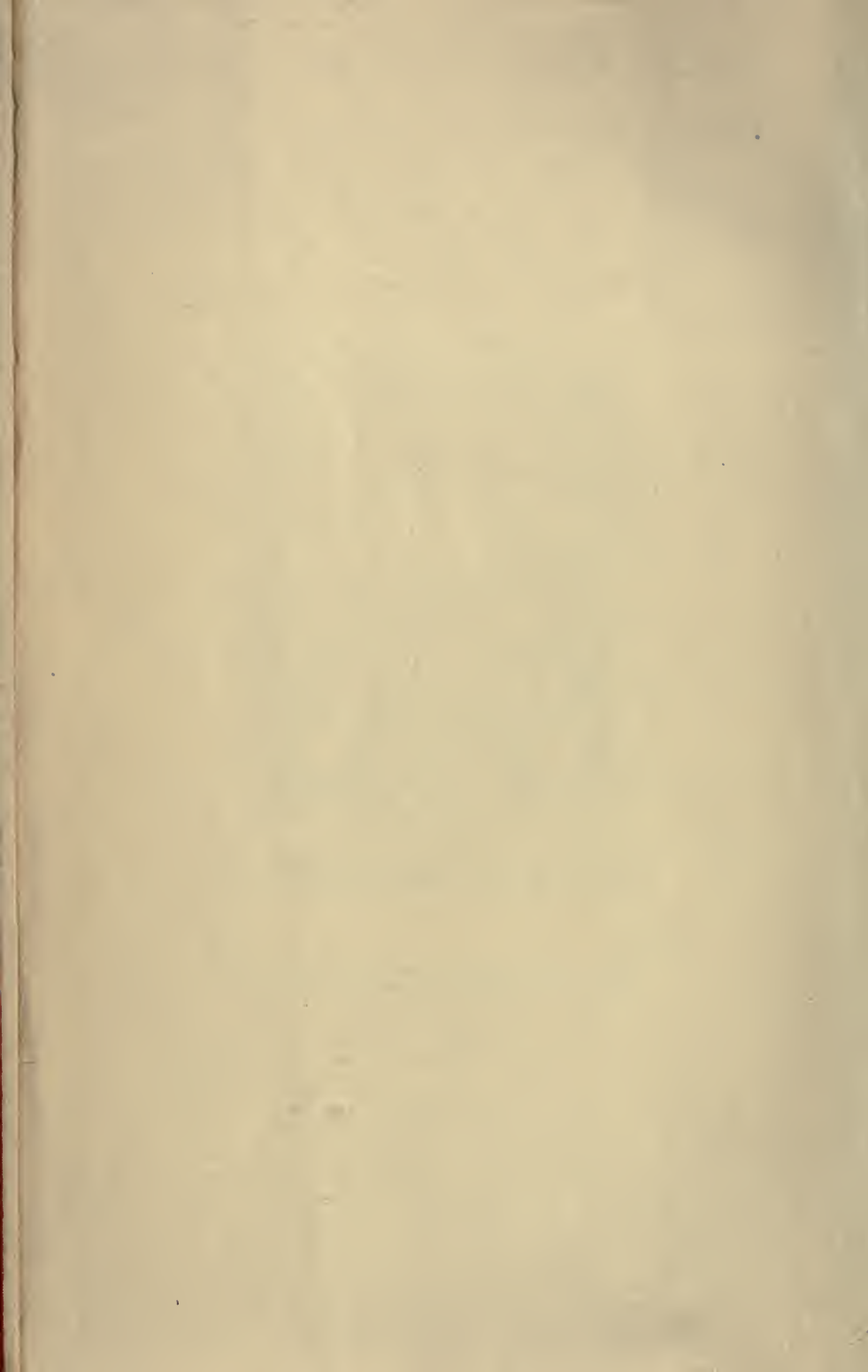
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**SOCIALISM :**  
**AN ANALYSIS**

# RUDOLF EUCKEN

HIS LIFE, WORK AND TRAVELS

By HIMSELF. TRANSLATED BY JOSEPH

McCABE

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SOCIALISM: AN  
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RUDOLF EUCKEN  
*Translated by* JOSEPH McCABE

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## PREFACE

SOCIALISM comprises an ideal of life as well as an economic statement. This ideal the politician may relegate to a secondary place and rarely notice, but for the philosopher it is the chief matter to be considered. Beyond both politician and philosopher, moreover, is the plain man, in whose mind the various movements of our time meet and must be adjusted to each other.

The economic question is a child of our own time and is directly related to the present condition of the world, but philosophy is based upon the tranquil work of thousands of years. Yet even philosophy seems to have reached a critical stage where radical alterations of all human things are demanded. We see everything about us in a state of suspense, and in the strain which ensues we may hope to obtain some general improvement by combining the two points of view. It is a strange situation to see ancient wisdom join hands with the advancing present: to find permanent hopes of human nature shooting through the stormy agitation of the day.



As a thinking being man does not exhaust his powers in the situation of the moment, the passing hour. To give point to his efforts he needs to direct his gaze to a higher order of life and a larger happiness. It is hope that gilds for him the dreariness of life, and lends it some joy and splendour. That is true, in the first place, of the individual, but it holds also for the race; for the race itself cannot prosper unless it seeks its task in life as a whole, is conscious of possibilities that are full of promise, and tries its strength upon obstacles. The higher the wave of life rises in this sense, the more zealously will new paths be sought, and the more passionately shall we try to determine which resource is the best for attaining the desired end. The question may rend humanity into hostile camps and give rise to grave doubts about the meaning of the whole scheme of things, but the doubts themselves will invest it with an incomparable greatness. The race now receives its fate from no alien power, but earns it by its own resolution and will.

This conflict over the ideal of life is shared by Socialism. But the struggle has only in the course of time passed from being a secondary current into the great stream of life, and concentrated all attention upon itself. We shall see how many causes have contributed to this, but we know from the

start how it has become a burning question, not only for the German people, but for the whole race. We cannot, however, sufficiently appreciate the situation to-day without recalling first, in general outline, the story of how the present strain developed.



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**THE HISTORY  
OF THE  
PROBLEM**



## CHAPTER I

### THE HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

OUR starting point is the problem of the physical maintenance of man in face of an indifferent or hostile nature: the problem of the hard struggle for life. The first improvement that individuals obtained in this regard was when they came together in social groups. They now had some protection against both the terrors of nature and the menace of their enemies. It was religions which first inspired them with a sense of task and duty; and gradually religion and morality, especially morality in its social aspect, entered into close combination and completed each other.

Of the religions with which we are familiar it is chiefly Judaism that has been of service in this respect in the course of its history. Concern for the good of one's neighbour was the chief point of its creed. Christianity in turn joined to the love of God an ardent love of men. It devoted itself to the poor, the suffering, and the

oppressed ; and it inspired many humane institutions and enkindled a willingness for self-sacrifice. All this sentiment and activity, however, failed to create an order of life in the sense of the Socialist ideal. It did not subject the conduct of the individual to a powerful common will, and it created no firm organisation. On the one hand, it attached more value to the voluntary action of charity, and on the other hand it considered that anything that tended to mitigate the undeniable economic distress was quite secondary to the confident expectation and joyous hope of a higher world, in comparison with which all the happiness and sorrow of this world fade into insignificance. The man who thus believes that we have no lasting city on the earth, but must ever look to a home beyond the grave, feels no impulse to seek a radical transformation of our economic life. He does not develop Socialistic ideas.

But the period which we call modern times brought a great change. The religious epoch was succeeded by one in which thought of this world predominated, and which was occupied more and more with the visible things of sense. These were considered not merely the very type of reality, but the essential aims and values of life. There now appeared a stronger vital impulse and a direct affirmation of life. The very soul of the

new tendency was to secure a full development of one's strength and raise it to the highest possible pitch: an ardent determination to reduce this world to subjection and do great things in it; to overcome all obstacles and create more greatness and more joy. This impulse to the exercise of strength raises the value of material things and of the whole of our economic life. They become, not simply indispensable means, but independent parts of life. New technical paths are opened for the economy of life. It is, as a whole, made more continuous and more progressive. It experiences the most radical transformations as time goes on. The old direct connection of producer and consumer disappears, no less than the direct connection of personality and work. The traditional fixed order of things yields more and more to a condition of general movement.

To this corresponds a new state of the soul. Man reflects more clearly and deliberately upon his position and conduct. He thinks out new theories, and expects from them a larger and more tangible happiness. Economic novels appear in conformity with the new ideas. It was in the atmosphere of the Renaissance that Thomas More created his famous *Utopia*—in 1516, contemporaneously with the appearance of Luther—directing an acute criticism upon the existing



economic condition, and sketching a new ideal of life that has survived four centuries.

Yet, while these changes do indicate a fresher feeling of life and a freer attitude toward reality, there was no radical alteration until the eighteenth century sharply broke with the old traditions. Even modern Socialism is connected by many threads with that movement. The eighteenth century clearly grasped the fact that man does not belong to a settled and self-contained world, but that he himself is called upon to improve and transform his existence. With confidence he takes control of his own fate and prepares the conditions of his own life. In this work the chief share is taken by thought. Henceforward it has not merely to mirror an existing world, or pour it into the moulds of conceptions. It is not, to use an expression of Hegel's, the owl of Minerva, which takes to flight only after the first onset of dusk. It is the dawn of a new age, spreading its rays over the world. And to this power of remoulding and uplifting the mind unites a power of discrimination and insight which submits everything to the proof, and accepts only what passes the test.

This vitalising and transforming activity implies also a confident belief in the power of reason in human nature, which is to make all reality reasonable and bring all that is reasonable into reality.

Religious belief gives place to a belief in reason ; though in the eighteenth century this itself contained an element of religion, since reason was regarded not as a mere property of a man, but as an indication of a superhuman intelligence. It is only this appeal to a divine, world-ordering reason that justifies us in making reason superior to all human authority and tradition. This enthroned reason inspired the social body with the belief that one and the same power of thought dominates and links together all men ; and it is in this connection that we first encounter the idea of perfect human equality. Mere manhood, even independently of God, becomes more and more a supreme value in itself. "Man," says Herder, "has no nobler word to apply to himself than what he himself is." It was in this sense that France took the lead. The more intolerable the course of the eighteenth century made the existing state of things, the more confidently and triumphantly rose this belief in the greatness and dignity of human nature. Men felt that they stood on the threshold of a better and happier age. The sparkling freshness and liveliness of the French literature of that period did not a little to open new paths for these ideas, and bring on the epoch of the Revolution, in which we still live.

All this, however, only slowly and hesitatingly

overtook the economic movement. The leading thinkers of the eighteenth century were chiefly concerned with the universe, and were more devoted to philosophical truth than to the condition of men, while the century was dominated by the grim tasks and complications of the social situation which gave the tendency its main character. At first, moreover, it was the political rather than the economic conditions that demanded attention ; it was a question of political freedom, not of equality. Economic systems and ideas of progress were not wanting, it is true ; but the Mercantilists, whose work filled the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth, treated the economic world merely as a means to increase the power of the State, and the Physiocrats, in spite of the value of their effort to base economic life upon nature, had not in their minds any clearly outlined economic scheme, such as Adam Smith (in his famous *Wealth of Nations*, 1776) created.

This work embodied the main idea of the eighteenth century in its economic application. It attempted to make the intricate economic framework perfectly intelligible, and it threw the whole stress upon the forces, impulses, and aims of individuals, with which it built up a comprehensive picture of the economic life. The picture was thoroughly optimistic. In the unrestricted



competition of individuals and nations Smith saw an immeasurable gain in freedom and power. The interests of all seemed to him to unite in a complete harmony, and to guarantee a steady progress of the whole. He thought of the whole as well as the individuals, but the entire collective condition seemed to him to be best promoted when it was left to the activities of individuals. Here also we have for the first time a general picture of the economic life in all its ramifications, an ideal and a prescription of life. While earlier ages had talked of a religious, scientific, or artistic type of life, we now have, added to these, if not placed higher than they, an economic type.

The influence of Smith's work extended, in varying degree, to every nation in Europe. The movement was hailed as a liberation from oppressive restrictions and an unchecked outpouring of strength. But people did not see the historical conditions of its appearance, or the immense complications which the further course of economic life would involve. These complications, however, soon arrived. The very period which adopted the economic theory of the eighteenth century experienced a complete transformation. The entire character of work was changed by the invention of machinery and the growth of factories, and other problems supervened. In spite of all

their achievements men were troubled in soul, and were soon sharply divided. The heart of the new problem was the radical alteration of economic life.

From this point onward there has been a steadily increasing restlessness. The work of the intelligence found more and more to do ; the movement spread continually beyond the frontiers of any special province, and man and his condition became the great problem. French thinkers were the first to give close attention to these problems. The French Socialists poured upon them a penetrating criticism, sketched the various economic possibilities, and greatly enriched our ideas and broadened our horizon. But they were not connected closely enough with the economic life itself and its conditions, and hence, in spite of all their freshness and imagination, they had no lasting influence. England, apart from the appearance of a few striking personalities like Robert Owen, followed its own way at first, and had little influence upon civilisation in general.

Germany was at that time very backward both in economic life and in theory. We must, of course, not forget that in that country philosophy did a great deal in the way of stimulating intellectual life, and considerably deepened the ideas of men. In particular its starting from the whole instead of the individual, and its idea of a



movement advancing in virtue of its own forces, had a great influence on every section of social life. But there was no close connection between philosophical production and the economic problem, and on this account the general social movement was directed by Lassalle, and still more by Marx, into far too narrow a path, and the Socialist ideal was conceived in too partisan a sense. Lassalle, it is true, was the first to enkindle the attention of large numbers of Germans with his fiery appeals, and he poured his own warmth into their souls. Marx, on the other hand, worked with untiring intellectual labour to construct a thoroughly considered system, and he thus came to have an immense influence on civilisation. He gave the Socialistic sentiment a definite aim and a means of procedure. The chief aim was to bring about a collective ownership of the means of production and "socialise" all property, and to recognise in the class-war a lever for the overthrow of the existing political conditions. It was thus that the Socialist movement captured the thoughts and sentiments of great masses of people. We must, however, bear in mind that the main idea of Socialism goes far beyond the conception of Marx; that it may be realised in many different ways, and that under one common head it embraces all sorts of opposite opinions and divergences. We are concerned with this

general idea, not with particular theories. Its starting point is the unqualified submission of individuals to the social collectivity and the treatment of the economic task as the chief business of life. Round this nucleus there gathered a large ideal of life which aims at completely transforming the human condition.

In the first place it can appeal to the convergence of various pre-existing tendencies. One of these is the extraordinary increase of economic duties and complications. We have only to think of the revolution of work through the technical application of the forces of nature, the detachment of the work from the personality of the man, the emergence of gigantic industrial complexes, the sharp antithesis of capital and labour, the concentration of the masses in large towns with its inevitable strengthening of their self-consciousness, the enormous increase of the population in a way that had never been known before on the earth—in most European countries the population increased threefold in the course of the nineteenth century—and, finally, the continuous and unprecedented progress of invention. All this was bound to turn thoughts and feelings more strongly than ever to economic questions and materially alter the conditions of life.

To this we must add the development of demo-

cratic ideas and institutions in modern times. The sentiment has gone far beyond the political world and has deeply influenced the fundamental ideas of men. There is now a question of distributing life and effort as far as possible into elementary forces, to raise these to a state of complete independence, and to make them the basis of every construction. Naturally, as the power of the individual grows, he asserts a stronger claim to vital activity and happiness. All the injustices and distresses of the traditional state of things are now directly felt, and all its antagonisms seem sharper than ever. The subject rises above the object and reduces it to obedience.

Finally there was, apart from economic matters, a zealous effort, which we may call Politism, to enlarge the power and the province of States as far as possible. There have been great changes in this respect in the course of centuries. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially in England, were disposed to cast the burden of political and economic life as much as possible upon individuals, to trust to the free association of particular forces, and to restrict the interference of the State. In the course of the nineteenth century the power of the State and the community has notably increased in many ways. In this we see the influence of the increasing settlement and differentiation of the various nations, of the



historical attitude with its tendency to link all fortunes and achievements in a continuous chain of ages, of the progressive organisation of economic life, and of the demand for some authority that should be superior to the economic antagonisms. Even speculative German philosophy, with its idea of a collective life that embraces all individuals, had a powerful influence on the development. The ideas of Hegel, in particular, provided the philosophical framework of Marxism. All these things together engendered a firm belief, almost a superstitious belief, in the State and its power to solve all the problems of life.

But into every new branch of the social life there poured an even deeper movement: a diversion of attention from the universe to human interests. The older order, as it was conceived in the Middle Ages, bound man closely with the whole by means of religion. The collective order had an undisputed superiority, and gave meaning and purpose to human life. In the course of modern times the stress has passed more and more to the side of the individual. Metaphysics was succeeded by psychology: religion by social life. The inner connection of man and the world was more and more relaxed, until at last it broke down altogether in a large number of cases. The development went through various stages. Religion seemed at first to modern men to be a friendly

and valuable companion, then it sank into a subordinate position, and finally it came to be thought of no consequence whatever, if not injurious.

The denial also had its various stages. Positivism was one of the mildest types, with its tendency merely to put the cosmic problem aside. More drastic was the radical German philosophy, particularly Neo-Hegelianism. The leader was Ludwig Feuerbach, who won large numbers of adherents by the definiteness of his statements and the glow of his eloquence. Religion, like everything supersensual, seemed to him "outworn." Engels, who was an ardent follower of Feuerbach, said: "We have done with God." Religion seemed to Feuerbach an illegitimate extension to the whole scheme of things of man's ideas and aspirations: a mischievous illusion which weakened the power of men and distracted them from their proper aims. His ideas are easily gathered from these words of his: "God was my first, reason my second, man my third and final thought." It is true that Socialism has room for great differences of opinion in regard to religion, but as a whole religion plays no part of any importance in it, and the Erfurt Program, in declaring that religion is a private affair of the individual, deprived it of the position of centre of gravity for man's thoughts and actions. The man who regards religion as a private matter

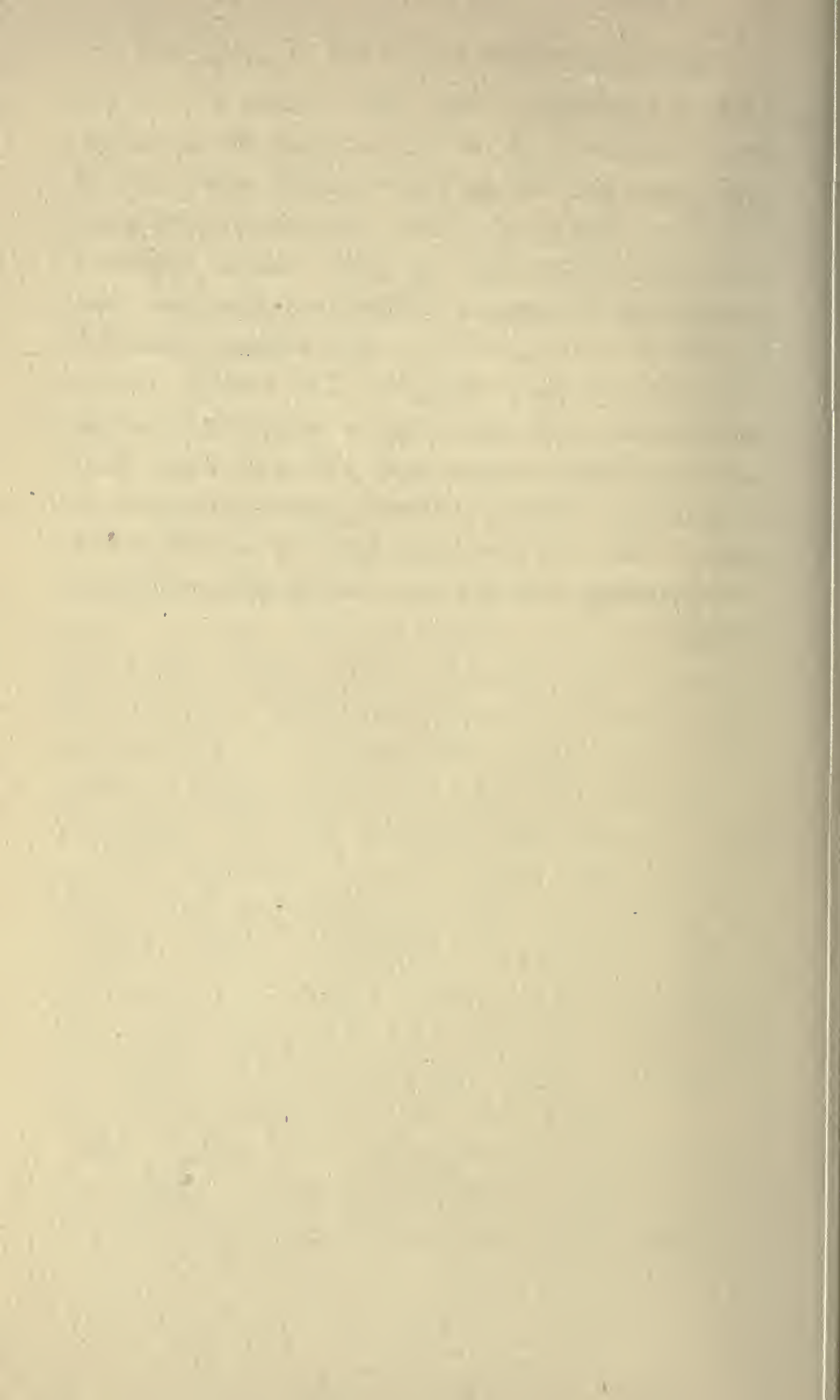


cannot think much of it. He has plainly broken with traditional ideas.

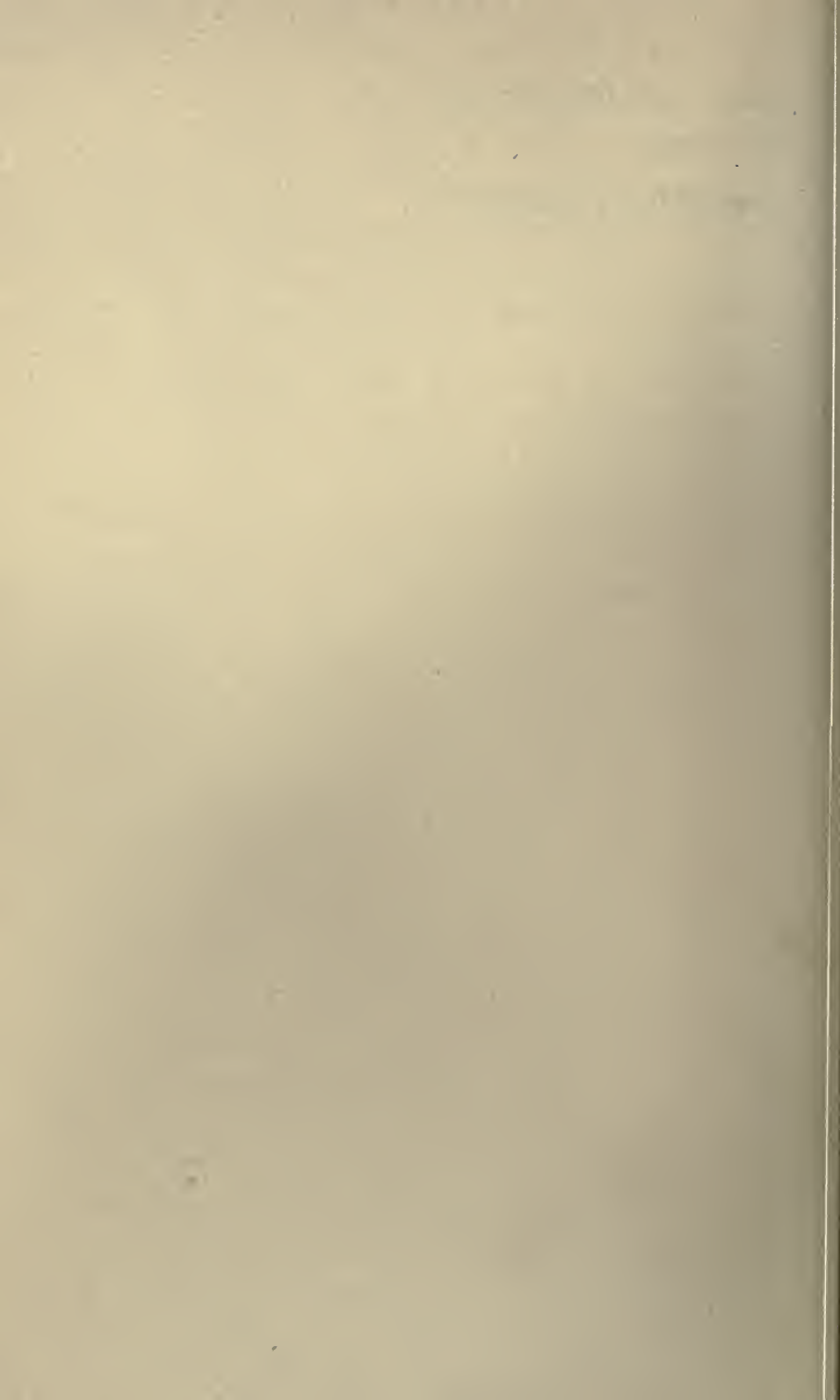
The result of all this is that Socialism has framed its own ideal, and it seeks to win the whole of human nature. The strength of this ideal is that it meets an actual movement in modern life which, by human force and resolution, is raised to the position of a principle and a whole, and is therefore the work of the whole man and the whole of humanity. The reciprocal support of facts and ideas lends a very considerable power to the whole. We have an experiment on the grandest possible lines in humanity and conducted by it. It puts a decisive question, and it demands either Yes or No. It is only the experience of the collective life that can show whether the answer which Socialism gives meets the whole reality of human nature ; for here it is not simply a question of mere theories and types of life, however well they may be constructed, but of actual vital developments. There is question, in a word, of the possibility of a new life which promises man an ampler truth and a larger happiness, and may absorb his whole soul. The new conceptions of life involve such radical alterations of values as humanity never saw before.

But the man who propounds this question must not analyse the movement from without, as if it were a soulless object, and content himself

with a cold description. He must get into the heart of the work of it, examine its impulses, and share the life to some extent and make it his own. Any person who sees only its detached parts will naturally lose the general picture; he will find it easy to criticise and condemn, but he will not do justice to his subject, and his criticism will not affect it. The further course of this essay will show that a sympathetic study does not imply assent, but we must insist that to condemn a thing without understanding it is useless. We will therefore first try to follow the Socialistic ideal in its own life as impartially as we can.



**THE AFFIRMATION  
OF THE  
SOCIALIST IDEAL**





## CHAPTER II

### THE AFFIRMATION OF THE SOCIALIST IDEAL

LIFE, as we are concerned with it, is no mere accumulation of separate efforts and achievements. It must have certain firm general lines about which all its diverse contents are arranged, and which give an internal continuity to the whole. Now the Socialistic life which at present pervades the race has two chief features, and these mingle Yes and No inseparably with each other.

1. It takes its stand exclusively on the ground of experience, on our direct perception of action and reaction, and it condemns every effort which looks beyond these limits as erroneous and fruitless.

2. It conceives reality as a combination of particular elements which are mutually related to each other and are in a state of constant reciprocity. The new thing it promises is to bring these elements more closely together and relate them more profitably to each other. It draws the circle round them more stringently, discovers

and develops a number of hitherto dormant resources, brings the scattered elements into firmer connection, and by this vitalising of the whole secures a fuller and richer content of the human kingdom. In this work it makes a confident affirmation of life, and promises it an ever increasing happiness. It comes into an already existing world, but by its influence it can convert what merely happens into an act of its own. Since it aims at inaugurating a new state of things, it has the character of an idealism, but an idealism that rejects all imaginary greatnesses and values, and conceives its task entirely within the limits of reality. This conception of life has drastically to deny and reject all that is alien and inimical, and therefore it shows a very definite limitation and resistance ; but this limitation and rejection are in the interest of a predominant affirmation, which discovers and appreciates greatness in what is simple and lies immediately round us.

This general conception may be divided into various parts. It implies :

1. A firm foundation,
2. Effective movements, and
3. A common structure.

In regard to the first, it demands :

(a) More unity and continuity than there are in the existing state of things, and

(b) A closer connection with man and better concentration of his powers.

As regards the second, it demands :

(a) The exclusive basing of life and all its arrangements upon the present (sincerity), and

(b) The equal vitalisation of all elements (equality and justice).

In regard to the third, it demands :

(a) Co-operation in a common will and conduct (socialisation), and

(b) A closer association of the material and the ideal factors of life (economism).

The general feature that arises from all this is the firmer concentration and fuller vitalisation of human life in every respect, an all-round increase of life. Now let us briefly and clearly consider each of these characteristic movements.

## § 1

### THE FOUNDATION

#### *(a) The Demand for Greater Unity.*

THE Socialist life is vigorously opposed to the confusion and the antagonisms which oppress modern life. There was much confusion in earlier ages of history, but it never reached such a pitch as now, and never before was the intolerable mischief of such a condition felt so keenly as now. Our age is a medley of old and new, of higher and lower, jostling and interfering with each other. We moderns borrow an important part of our culture from antiquity, with its instinct for form and limit, yet we have all round us the immense abundance of strength and the unceasing exaltation of life of our later age. We cannot do without the higher world opened to us by Christianity, without its deep inwardness and its moral earnestness ; but at the same time we eagerly embrace the visible world and its wealth. The currents of modern life diverge even more than this. We rejoice in



the sparkling fulness of life of the Renaissance, but we find indispensable also the clear intellectual life and purposive illumination that followed it. We enjoy gratefully the splendid treasures of our classical days, yet we adopt also a strict realism with all its emphasis on the world of sense. Is it any wonder that individuals differ so much from each other in their acts and deeds and feelings? Is it surprising that our life is so much occupied with indecisive reflections and varying moods, and that there is no indisputable goal to combine our forces and put a check upon the wilfulness of individuals? Is it strange that we have no great men, no men of high creative power, no men whose souls pour fire upon the world?

For several decades this lack of inner unity and of a dominant centre has been painfully felt and deplored. I myself wrote a work in 1888, in which I described the actual spiritual confusion and did my best to find a remedy. Since then the inner collapse has grown worse than ever, and it now darkens our days.

The Socialist ideal takes up a firm attitude in face of this confusion, and promises us a radical cure of it. Where else, it asks, can a man find unity and continuity except in himself, in concentration upon the centre of his own life, in his self-preservation and his welfare? Here alone can the various movements meet, and strengthen and



supplement each other. Here everything that is subordinate or superfluous must be discarded, all antagonisms be reconciled or disappear, and the spiritual and the material form an indissoluble unity. To this general condition of man everything must contribute, and by it as a standard everything must be judged. All experience must be associated with the simplest and most fundamental sensations. The past must be converted into a living present. From this standpoint we attain that comprehensive philosophy of life which our age so sorely needs. Life and work enter into an intimate harmony.

The strength of this conception of life lies not merely in the fact that it treats a whole nation as an economic unity—in this respect Rodbertus with his finely graduated system might challenge comparison with it—but still more in its construction of a common measure of life and thought for the whole man, its creation of a spiritual atmosphere that embraces and adjusts all duties and all accomplishments. A common atmosphere of this kind is now found, apart from Socialism, only in Catholicism, but we know how wide a chasm there is between this creed and modern man; besides that its reconciliation of contradictions cannot be regarded by our critical culture as a real inner unity. Catholicism speaks to us in the language of the Middle Ages. Socialism

lives in the very heart of the present, and shares its struggles and anxieties.

(b) *The Demand for a New Texture of Reality.*

SOCIALISM takes up its position clearly and deliberately upon a man's experience, but it cannot do this without coming to terms with a deep-rooted error and materially altering the traditional idea. The question is : What is the position of man in regard to the world ? Clearly the great whole embraces him and prepares life for him ; but has he the right to regard himself as its centre, seeing that he is entirely subject to the immutable laws of the universe and is, measured by the infinity of time and space, so negligible and diminutive a creature ? Through countless ages he has committed the error of putting himself, in his own opinion, in the place of the world. He has unthinkingly imported human magnitudes and values into it, and imagined it subordinated to his own designs. He deals with an image he has himself created as if it were genuine reality, and he ascribes to it his own chief wishes and hopes.

This humanisation of the world gave rise to a whole world of illusions, and made man a stranger to himself. More than two thousand years ago Xenophanes said that men take their images of

the gods from themselves. Modern thought has, in the whole course of its development, recognised the deceptiveness and error of this, and has striven constantly to banish the supersensuous and metaphysical as an illusion from the human mind. Positivism made headway with its claim that we ought to restrict our ideas and our life rigorously to the province of direct perception and experience. Not without risk of grave and dangerous error could we pass that province, it said ; and still less should we trouble about our relations to unknown powers, or place any reliance on them. In this way all religion and all metaphysics was declared to be a delusion. By the side of this sober conception of the Positivists there then appeared Ludwig Feuerbach's more highly coloured picture, and all theology and metaphysics was reduced to anthropology. Socialism shares these ideas, but its own special contribution is that it took what had hitherto been regarded by small groups as a scientific theory and made it a power, an inspiration, for great masses of men.

In this, as in so many other things, Socialism availed itself vigorously of an existing movement of the time, and followed it boldly to its logical consequences. It detached the problem of life entirely from the cosmic problem, and cast man entirely upon his own resources. The limitation and impoverishment which this involves do not



trouble it. What do those inaccessible depths matter to us? Our sorrows and sufferings do not seem to touch them. Those dark powers neither hurt nor help us. The great world follows only its own iron laws, and they know no exception and admit no accommodation in the interest of man.

Moreover, this very limitation means a strengthening of our life, and this far outweighs all that is sacrificed. We shall work all the more energetically to improve our real possessions when we cease to think about imaginary ones. Whatever else be doubtful, we have man—man in the totality of his life, man above and beyond all separate parts. That solid fact becomes a great task for us when we take over the whole of human nature. History shows that man is not something perfectly obvious to himself. He has first to discover himself; he has to tear away all false accretions, all parasitic growths, all that is imposed from without, all artificial and untrue ideas of life.

Humanity has repeatedly found refuge in itself, in its own unadulterated nature. It has time after time been seized with an ardent desire to work out its own being, to make its way unhindered to purer and stronger vital sources. It did so in the later period of the ancient world, and again in the course of the eighteenth century. Rousseau,

particularly, pointed out a way in which life might be delivered from the ruins of the past and the evils of the present. Do we not suffer from similar evils to-day? Do we not often lose sight of man as a whole in considering the parts, in dealing with the narrow mind which takes its little corner for the whole world? Do not even scholars and artists strangely forget the whole man at times in the contemplation of themselves?

We have to decide which is the best way to choose in order to put man into full possession of his powers. The Socialist ideal would give a simple and plain answer to this. It is "society": it is human co-operation that develops the proper characteristics of man, that strengthens by association what has become weak and uncertain and irresolute through dissociation. Society alone can develop the real human qualities of a man; it is only amongst men that one becomes a man. The old truth, that man is a social animal (*ζῶον πολιτικόν*, *animal sociale*), is now for the first time fully appreciated. All the prerogatives of man depend upon his not remaining an isolated point but being in constant association and reciprocal activity with his fellows. As a definite proof of this Aristotle has pointed to the formation of rational speech as opposed to the mere sounds by which animals express their sensations, and



has related the whole advance of reason to this. But, under the influence of the old ideas, he regarded reason, the intellectual faculty, as the chief thing, and he deduced the human form of society as a simple consequence of this. The modern way of thinking, which starts from experience, has taken up the contrary position. It considers society to be the root of all spiritual power, of everything that lifts man above nature.

The thorough elaboration of this idea gives a new view of human existence. All conceptions of greatness and value diverge greatly from the traditional standard; all the separation into different provinces is seized upon by the new thought and adapted to it. What we had been accustomed to call "reason" is now a standard of human greatness, and, whereas we had formerly distinguished between a secular or cosmic and a social life, the social life is now our exclusive concern. Society now engenders all spirituality and embraces the whole of life, and its welfare has become the highest of aims. This aim has now two meanings, the old and the new. "Good" is now merely something that promotes the good of society; it coincides with "useful" in the social sense. "True" is what has results in the social order and ensures its assent. There is no longer any room for the old conceptions of things that are good and true in themselves; there is no such

thing as good and true in that sense. In this way man becomes, in the words of Protagoras, the measure of all things ; with the difference, however, that we do not mean the individual man, but collective humanity.

This development has made life and conduct more fluid and elastic. It gets rid of all the rigidity of absolute and self-sufficing truth. It brings the standard of greatness nearer to man's condition and efforts. Like the eighteenth century, the movement has directed a penetrating criticism upon, and greatly altered, the traditional standards of life, but it differs from the earlier phase in the fact that Socialism does this from the point of view of society, not of the individual. This makes it less abstract, and connects it more closely with our actual circumstances and duties. Thought and action can unite more intimately. The one can pass without difficulty into the other.

But, while Socialism is more concerned about the social condition than thought was generally in the eighteenth century, which was mainly concerned with the individual, the aim is substantially the same. It is a question of bringing the whole of existence under man's control. For this purpose we need above all things clearness and strength, and the combination of the two promises us a new world. We have to develop reason to a pitch of complete self-consciousness, to root out all

unreason, to shape everything in view of a definite purpose.

The chief means of attaining this desired clearness and strength is education. It is especially by education that a man is raised from the state of nature to civilisation and develops his entire humanity. It has to brace all his powers and make them of value for vital purposes. It can raise them indefinitely ; and on it is chiefly based the confident expectation of an unfaltering mental and moral progress of the race. That is the spirit of the saying of Helvetius : “ L'éducation peut tout.” In this ancient and modern thought differ materially from each other. Ancient thought regarded a man's endowment as a fixed and limited quantity which could only be developed to the extent of its inherent capacity. Modern thought sees in man a germ of indefinite life which can develop all kinds of fresh powers. Hence our concern about education has become the main business of life, and all the resources of society must be enlisted in it. For this it is necessary to bring the whole material and spiritual possessions of the race to each individual and thus thoroughly permeate him. This effort on the part of Socialism is in harmony with an historical movement which has greatly increased in strength in recent centuries. We find ourselves confronting colossal tasks. Has not culture been far too little a matter of the whole



man and of each individual man ? Has it not entered far too little into the individual life ? Great teachers of the race, such as Comenius, Pestalozzi and Froebel, have deeply deplored this alienation of our culture. Is there not much here for Socialism to do ? Up to the present there has been a deep cleft between the higher and lower strata of the social order. Must we not do all we can to bridge this gulf ?

Modern education is in harmony with modern humanitarianism. It corresponds with the earnest endeavour of Socialism to bring more comfort and joy into the life of each individual, to free it as far as possible from restrictions, to substitute mildness and kindness for hardness and rigorism, to infuse this spirit even into legislation and government. There is question here not only of the content, but also the form, of life, which is often wrongly underestimated. It is a particular weakness of German life to treat the subjective condition, the feelings of individuals, as secondary and unimportant. We were content with the soundness of our measure, and forgot to make it attractive to men. Aristotle shrewdly observed that food must be prepared so as to satisfy the guests as well as the cook. He was thinking of political matters, and his words contain a lesson for Germany. The acknowledged excellence of our officials has not prevented them from being very much dis-



liked at times. The harsh and masterly tone they often adopt, as if they were schoolmasters, has done a great deal to make many a German feel as if he lives in a foreign land in his own country. This evil of the mutual estrangement of citizens and officials goes back even to the time of Luther, who says : " Doctor Martinus is not only a theologian and a defender of the faith, but also a champion of the rights of poor folk who come from every part to ask his help and intercession with the authorities in such numbers that he would have quite enough to do without taking any other work on his shoulders." Do not these words show much between the lines ?

There was also the evil, right down to our own time, that the State demanded many sacrifices of its subjects without taking any trouble to secure their own assent and consent. Such a thing was possible in earlier ages, when life was more oppressive, but it is impossible now that the minds of men are awake.

Dislike of us abroad corresponded to this dislike of officials in Germany itself. We had no skill in getting foreign peoples to recognise our real qualities. The French were, in this respect, far more skilful. The unhappy issue of the war is partly due to the fact that the nation which regarded itself as a nation of poets and thinkers had not the gift of presentation, the eloquence,

the fire, to compete with the superior propaganda of other peoples. We—that is to say, mainly the Government of the time—were clumsy in the psychic mobilisation of our forces, in organising them and concentrating them upon the great struggle. We do not sufficiently apply our strength at decisive points. The German needs to take to heart the words of the wise Philo, that man does not live in a desert ; he must not underestimate others, and must remember that he has not only the reality, but also the appearance, to consider. We regarded it as a great thing to treat the effect on other nations as a matter of no consequence.

It was even more mischievous than our statecraft was unable to understand the spiritual currents of the time and direct them in the proper way. We thought, for instance, that we could neglect with impunity the great democratic wave that has surged through the civilised world for the last few centuries. We lost sight of the profound difference between the thinker and the statesman. The thinker can, and must, pursue his work on a permanent level, undisturbed by the views of men ; but the statesman has to reckon with the currents of the hour as so many forces or he will come to grief.

Here, as in so many other questions, small things and great are often mingled together, but the Socialist is determined that both shall serve his

main design of making man and his welfare the central consideration. It is not a question of particular achievements or demands, but of changing man as a whole, of delivering him from deep-rooted errors and putting him in the full enjoyment of his powers. It is a question of a radical alteration of values in human life, of making a new man. And the first condition of doing this is a solid foundation, which Socialism promises.

## § 2

### EFFECTIVE MOVEMENTS

WE must now consider the various transfers and increases of strength which the Socialist life demands and effects. In this respect it seems to be the fulfilment and completion of certain movements which pervade the whole of modern life. It draws these movements to itself and increases their intensity. For its main purpose, however, it requires a transfer and an intensification at two chief points: it demands that we turn from the past to the present, and it demands a redistribution of forces in the direction of equality. On the one side the Socialist life conducts a stern struggle against insincerity, and on the other side against the injustice and inequality of the traditional order. This union of sincerity and justice of life promises to give the whole a greater vitality and an ethical character that is far superior to the ordinary moral teaching. We will first consider this new life in its relation to the times.



*(c) The Struggle Against Insincerity of Life.*

Socialism finds that the traditional mode of life is unsound in that it does not trust to its own powers, but binds us to past ages, and sustains externally what is internally dead. It thus prevents us from giving vitality and full value to the resources of our own time, and places restrictions on our activity. Certainly we have here a serious problem. It is one of the main distinctions between the natural and the spiritual world that in the former everything remains in its state of rest or movement until it experiences some change from without; whereas in the realm of spirit each action requires a continuous vitalisation if it is not to sink rapidly or wholly disappear. A sustained strain is necessary to keep up to the height that has been reached. In most cases this is not done. In the average man the law of inertia holds good; it turns action into a mechanical habit, and the real present becomes merely an accumulation of past elements. Once more, therefore, a fact becomes a problem for us: the past ever threatens to spread over the present.

The complications that arise from this fact have greatly exercised modern times and especially our own time. Our civilisation has sprung from historical ground—we need only think of Christianity and of the ancient world—yet modern

times have produced a culture of their own. Old and new now mingle in great confusion. We live between two worlds, and the modern world tends to fall into a grave insincerity. The struggle against this was energetically taken up in the seventeenth century, but all sorts of obstacles were put in its way. Socialism had the distinct merit of coming nearest to living history and taking up its stand mainly on the present. By this radical displacement it has very greatly quickened the pulse of life. Many institutions were fitted for particular ages, but they have far outlived the need for them. What was once good has been turned by the course of history into an evil. Is it not useful, indeed necessary, to make an end of these things? Step by step we have to advance from a half-awakened and narrowly restricted world to one that is wide awake and consciously active. The idea of progress has a very powerful influence in this. It is, at the bottom, the desire of modern man for indefinite life. From the heights of philosophic speculation it has spread over the whole of life. And, as it spread, it inspired a vigorous determination to get rid entirely of all that was outworn and separate it from what was advancing.

Think of religion! How many contradictions there are in it to-day, and how earnestly do we long for complete sincerity! We quietly accept

the old ecclesiastical picture of the world with its sense-appealing miracles, and at the same time we admit the teaching of modern science with its vigorous ideas of causality. We base our religious beliefs on facts of an historical character, and at the same time our historical culture and criticism make them uncertain, if not incredible. We form our conception of the world independently of all human standards, and at the same time our religious and personal ideas imply standards which to the modern scientific mind are purely mythological. The contradiction goes far beyond mere ideas ; it rends the fundamental impulse of life. From our religious point of view we regard man as a feeble being, entirely dependent on supernatural assistance ; in our culture we describe him as a being relying upon his own powers and summoned to awaken all his forces.

The deepest reason for the confusion is that Christianity brought about a specific historical situation, and this was permanently established, though it fell out of accord with the progress of the ages. At the time when Christianity arose Mediterranean civilization was much enfeebled, and it needed a fresh vital impulse ; and at the same time there appeared new peoples to whom the old civilisation was to be communicated. This conjunction of circumstances led to a work of synthesis which gave a support and a destiny



to the new peoples. Meantime, however, great changes occurred in life itself. Are we now to seek light for our seething and tumultuous present, with its great problems, from the past, and measure it by the ancient standards? Is a dead age to dominate our own time? Deeper still is the contradiction that Positivism found in our condition, and Socialism has willingly taken over from it: the whole of religion is, it says, merely an historical category, an anthropomorphic setting of reality, due entirely to special conditions that exist no longer. To see this anthropomorphism clearly is to destroy it. Are we to blame Socialism for drawing the logical conclusion from that principle?

In the political and social world also we are threatened with insincerity on account of the encroachment of the past upon the present. It is clear, in the first place, that there are around us to-day large numbers of laws, institutions, and ideas which have no root in our own time, yet they are maintained as our own, and they do a great deal of harm. Collectively they threaten to drag life down to a condition of semi-animation and half-hearted conviction. The consequences of this are particularly grave because the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have, as a fact, brought about great changes in social and political matters. Such is the confusion that the past often



hides the present from us. We see things in the light of another age, and our own life is thus enfeebled. I do not speak merely of earlier years, but of our own time, for we Germans show ourselves in many ways incompetent to bring out the full force of life and meet the demands of our own time. We live at far too slow a pace, and we let valuable opportunities slip by. We have only to recall the long refusal of the Prussian Government to grant a just suffrage! Did we not see the great political and economic changes that were taking place all round us? Did we not see the injustice and the danger of the existing order? We did, and we did not. We were too sluggish to overcome the difficulties and grant the present its rights. We looked upon Austria, also, and treated it in the light of the past, in the glory of its earlier ages. We did not observe the mighty changes that the rise and division of nationalities had involved. Every journey that we made to Prague, Cracow, and Pesth brought them before us, but the mental eyes of our statesmen were closed against them. So we failed to see how frail was the structure on which we laid the weight of our foreign policy and our fate. Socialism is on its guard against this mental blindness. It will change the entire current of the movement and keep life entirely to the present.

We have, moreover, been far too much disposed

to let the state of civilisation pass over us like some uncontrollable fate. Our intellectual life is made up of a number of different elements : Greek, Roman, Teutonic, Christian, medieval and modern are all blended in it. We live on the past. But we do not sufficiently attempt to make out of it all a superior and comprehensive present, and to give this its proper place in history. Hence our culture has been far too much a mere matter of learning, instead of being a practical idealism of man and the spirit. We take a momentary situation as definitive and mould our conduct by it. We often mistake the conditions under which the spiritual movement was required. It was, for instance, a particular situation that gave rise to the classical life of Germany. An important element in it was the close association of German and Greek life. In Greek life men then saw a clarified picture of their own aims. The Greeks seemed to them to be the finest representatives of real humanity and pure beauty. But ought we to forget the animating bond that made the union of the two cultures so fruitful ? Ought we to entrust for ever the control of our universities to those gifted humanists of long ago, and continue to draw up our educational schemes on their ideas ?

The hindrances to the freshness and originality of our life from such a state of things are visible

everywhere. We take a particular pride in German thoroughness, but this may easily become a weakness by causing us to be slow and meticulous. We like to load our ship with a good deal of ballast, and in this way we cut down the speed. How much, for instance, could a genius like Leibnitz not have done for the race and his people if he had not obscured the chief points of his system with so many additions? We are eager to put our life upon a broad and solid foundation of historical culture, but we often devote ourselves to a mere historical erudition which confuses life and knowledge, and makes one's own view merely an appendage to other people's opinions. There is still truth in the saying of Mme. de Staël, that the German is at home everywhere except in his own house; that he is acquainted with all periods except the present. In the eighteenth century men's minds were narrower, but their thoughts were clearer and stronger. They thought in sharp antitheses, whereas the German is too apt to be content with an easy-going "this as well as that."

In view of all this it is significant that Socialism entirely discards the burden of history and entrusts life to the immediate present. It says, with Paracelsus, the founder of modern medicine: "Of what use is the rain that fell a thousand years ago? Only that which falls now is of any service



to us. What good was the sunshine of a thousand years ago to this year ? ” He accordingly demands a thorough revision of our whole culture, a resolute and uncalculating preference of all that the present affords and requires, so that the world may be our own possession, and not belong to others.

Since Socialism aims at this vitalisation and rejuvenescence, it naturally turns in the first place to the rising generation and seeks to win its allegiance. The old may have the qualities of wisdom, experience, and prudence, but Socialism turns rather to the young, who are nearer to the sources of life, and seem to have more powerful and more original ideas. Hence it seems so important to have their support and co-operation. The age-limit is brought forward as much as possible, and the young are brought into their counsels. In all this there is a firm belief in an unceasing progress of the human race. All the glories of the past pale beside the ideals and hopes of the future. The great problem is the rejuvenation of the race and the expulsion of all insincerity from the minds of men and from the institutions of our collective life. We shall have to consider these matters later, but there is an undeniable truth in the saying : whoever has the young has the future.



*(d) The Struggle Against Inequality.*

In the problem of equality we have, simultaneously with the struggle between past and present, a struggle between the demands of reason and the actual human condition. Here again there is question, not of a few particular defects and shortcomings, but of a radical change in the process of life. In this respect Socialism owes its power to the fact that it is the final term of a struggle that has lasted a thousand years, and it raises this struggle to the rank of a paramount and general issue. The claim of equality, or of the equal treatment of all who contribute to life, is based upon the conviction that inequality means injustice, and that this injustice is intolerable to any fully awakened intelligence. Here more than anywhere else the Socialist system assumes the character of an ethical idealism, since it pursues a demand of reason to its ultimate consequences, affirms these against the most obstinate resistance of experience, and makes everything subordinate to it. And this claim of equality and justice does not apply merely to all individuals, but to every aspect of life; they are all to be regulated in the sense of complete equality.

Here it is impossible not to recognise a serious strain. Existence presents the spectacle of men who are extremely unequal. Nature makes us

unequal both in bodily and mental endowment, and civilisation only adds to the inequalities with its increasing discrimination. What can we say in opposition to this mass of facts? We have nothing to oppose except our power of thought. Everything depends on this single point: on this power which seems so evanescent externally, yet is so mighty internally. Upon it depends the advance of an historical movement that has already had an immense influence, and continues to exercise it. The problem has had a most interesting development, especially when we recall that there are so many kinds of equality: religious, rational, political, socialistic, and Communist. The movement has passed more and more from a non-sensuous to a material form, and has at length deduced social demands from processes of thought.

In the course of history it was at first religion that assailed inequality. From the common relation of all men to God, the fount of all life, it concluded that all men were equal. We need quote only the pregnant words of Luther: "Though we are never equal before the world, yet are we all equal before God, children of Adam, creatures of God; and every man is of the same value as any other." The idea of a common priesthood of the faithful is based upon the same principle. But as the traditional religion drew a sharp distinction between this world and the next, its idea of equality had

no deep influence in secular matters. It did, indeed, bring about a certain alleviation—it created a place in which antagonisms disappeared—but it saw no injustice in inequality. In this it was moved by its confident expectation of happiness in the next world, in which there would be no distinctions; in fact, the poor and oppressed seemed to be entitled to the highest places. Modern Socialism, however, finds no consolation in that doctrine. It is not satisfied with an equality in hope and expectation.

The lead of the historical movement passed from religion to intellectual life; personal standards were replaced by impersonal. In the later ages of the ancient world this had occurred before, but it reached its height at the beginning of the seventeenth century. It based its idea of equality, not on a relation to God, but on the reason which is inherent in all men. Even Descartes appealed to the equality of reason in all men (*rationem quod attinet, quia per illam solam homines sumus, aequalem in omnibus esse facile credo*), and Fichte's idea of the equality of all that has human features was only a development of this.

From the philosophic world the idea of equality now gradually passed into the souls of men, and it began to have practical influence in the world. The movements which preceded the French Revolution at first bore the ensign of political liberty,



not of economic equality, but the idea of equality steadily gained ground and led to intense agitations. It was now conceived in two different senses, a negative and a positive. The negative as well as the positive declared that all men were equal, but it made equality consist essentially in awarding the same formal rights to every individual, including the right to develop by his own powers ; the actual inequality of individuals was not disputed. But the idea in its positive form demanded the complete and unreserved equality of all individuals. All inequality it regarded as unjust, as a mere consequence of external circumstances, especially property and education. It was to be abolished by every possible means, and an absolute equality was to be established. During the French Revolution the Gironde held the negative, the Mountain the positive, conception of equality. The final issue of the movement was pure Communism (Babeuf). It was soon forcibly suppressed, but, as is well known, its influence is not at an end.

The idea of equality captured, not merely the individual, but his whole frame of mind and his work, and sank deeper and deeper into his spirit. We need only point to a few instances. The doctrine of equality places the idea of humanity above all distinctions, and uses it as the standard for judging everything. The higher degree of univer-



salinity decides upon the value of individual institutions. The whole of the race is preferred to any particular nation, and the whole of a nation to any of its particular elements. As a man derives his importance from the fact that he belongs to humanity, all division into classes must cease. The ideal is a class-less social order.

This leads to a determination to lessen the differences between men as much as possible, if not to obliterate them altogether. This is done in the life of the State, in education, and in the suffrage. The idea of equality becomes a superior standard of value. It compels us to avoid everything that places one man above another, and so lowers a man, not only in the sight of others, but in his own estimation. Great and small are thus knit closely together. The Germans, for instance, have a tendency to create artificial distinctions and divide men into various classes. This is bound to weaken the consciousness of the community, and lessen the interest of some in the whole. Often in our distinction between the schools of the people and the schools of the middle class we forgot the work of building up a common humanity; and in our gradation of lower, middle, and higher officials we lost sight of the general duties of officials. The distinction was carried into the most trivial details. Certain military circles regarded themselves as "superior." Even our universities

were not ashamed to encourage the enormity of a man calling himself a Doctor of such and such a place, in order to make it clear that the older universities regarded themselves as superior. Such facts must be borne in mind by any man who wants to appreciate properly the tremendous power of the movement toward unity. A distinction of that kind is rather political than pædagogical.

There have been great changes in the position of the various classes. Time itself has gone far beyond Socialism ; but the Socialists may boast that they first raised the matter to the rank of a principle and developed all its consequences.

This way of thinking not only opposed sharp distinctions between different kinds of human activity, but it could not tolerate the ordinary way of estimating work. For thousands of years intellectual work and manual labour have been regarded as different in value. It seemed to be a proof of idealistic sentiment to put spiritual, especially intellectual, work far above physical and manual. Meantime, however, there has been a considerable change. Even Aristotle, representing the Greek spirit, spoke of the hand as the greatest of implements ; and Pestalozzi taught us the importance of the hand in education. In our own time it is at last fully recognised how the two worlds overlap ; how all manual labour is permeated with intellectual life. There is far

more use of the mind and technical skill in the ordinary workshop, and the earlier distinction between higher and lower is fast disappearing. Differences of quality have been turned more and more into mere differences of quantity, and the sharp distinction that once existed gives place to a continuous line.

This development involves a material change in the whole social order. For thousands of years it had been customary to divide humanity, under various forms, into a smaller and a far larger half, the distinction being based at one time on race, at another time on personal freedom, at another on property or education, and so on. In Germany not more than five per cent. of our youths obtained full university education. This five per cent. seemed to constitute the main part of our civilisation, and they set the standard for the education of the whole of the people. Much was done to improve this, it is true, and there was a good deal more co-operation of the various classes; but the fact remained that the great majority were only imperfectly developed, often scandalously neglected. There was still a distinction of intellectual classes: a distinction between the educated and the uneducated.

The more earnestly we reflect on this division of humanity, the more urgently we feel compelled to ask whether it is necessary, and whether human



ingenuity and goodwill cannot make an end of it. This question, however, raises the further question of the predominance of the economic factor and its chances of abolishing inequality. The more the effort to secure equality pervades our life, the more painful and intolerable is the stark contradiction between a purely theoretical equality and the actual state of things. It is all very well for individual citizens to get equal rights and to be free to aspire after all sorts of material and intellectual pleasures, but they must have a certain amount of property before they can profit by the right. The man who has no property can do nothing; these good things are to him mere possibilities. The task of maintaining himself is full of care and danger, and these things are bound to embitter the souls of men in proportion as the modern economic development causes sharper contrasts than ever. New York is the city of millionaires, and their number increases steadily; but it has also been established on medical authority in New York that in the year 1914 five per cent. of the children examined were underfed, and that by the year 1919 the proportion had risen to nineteen per cent. Surely such figures give ground for reflection! And the feeling against earlier ages on account of this state of things has grown stronger. What seemed at one time an inevitable fate is now regarded as the culpable work of human



institutions. Class-differences have drifted into class-conflicts.

It is particularly difficult to see how these people without property can rise in the mental scale. A few members of the working class may climb to a higher level, but this is generally due to some fortunate chance or to friendly assistance. This state of things seems not only unjust to the sufferers, but an injury to the race, which ought to entrust the control of its affairs to the best in every class of the population. Much has been done in this direction, but it was left to Socialism to devote its whole strength to the problem and to replace philanthropy by civic and national institutions. Socialism need not overlook the difficulty of these and similar problems. It can freely recognise the limits of economic possibilities. But it makes a considerable difference if we remain far short of those limits, or if we make a serious attempt to push them back and so free a man from his guilt as far as possible.

In this sense the idea of equality is an urgent demand of justice, a triumph of reason over the unreason of human affairs, a victory of the whole race over the interests of particular classes or individuals.

### § 3

#### A COMMON STRUCTURE

THE claim that we shall base our life entirely upon the present and the demand that we shall develop all forces equally and unite them in an undifferentiated whole constitute a special type of reality, and this needs only a firm structure to triumph over all obstacles. This structure is in Socialism provided by a combination of socialisation and economism. By this means, as in the earlier proposals, life is drawn together more actively and based directly upon human interests, and thus it gains in strength, self-consciousness, and happiness. Let us first consider socialisation, which is the very heart of the Socialist ideal.

##### *(e) The Demand for Socialisation.*

Socialisation alone will give the Socialistic life a definite embodiment. It confidently enters upon a struggle against the distraction and the egoism of individuals. It brings the communal idea out

of the realm of wishes and dreams, realises it, and enables it to dominate the whole life of the race. This strongly organised society will be the standard of all values. Ethical ideas, in particular, will be materially changed when socialisation assigns them a fixed aim and a firm support.

This socialisation promises considerable gains in many ways. In the first place the clearer consciousness of purpose and the linking of individual forces which it brings about through the collective will must make the work of the individual more fruitful and rid it of all restrictions and friction. The whole system will run more smoothly, superfluous things will drop out, and individual faculties will supplement each other and increase each other's productivity.

Yet however valuable this gain may be, it is not the chief thing. This is rather of an ethical character. It is a question of devising a new relation of man both to his fellows and to the object of his labour, and linking him more closely with them. The traditional idea of work makes a man think mainly of his own profit. It impels him to think first of all of himself. There was a cogent reason for this as long as the various spheres of life were divided; as long as every man had his own field or practised his own craft, and enjoyed the fruits of his own labour. This state of things, however, became intolerable when



modern labour developed its divisions. The work was now more and more detached from the workers, and went its own way. Under the lead of technical science it brought the forces of nature to an indefinite extent into the service of man. It made the individual worker defenceless, as its vast industrial aggregations robbed him of his independence, while capital obtained an appalling power and forced him to serve the designs of others. He became simply a piece of merchandise, the value of which was settled by the market. Thus the race drifted into a sharp antithesis of "labour and capital," and the two soon proved irreconcilable enemies.

In face of this there arose amongst the workers the stern struggle for emancipation which is one of the leading features of our time. The workers took their fate into their own hands, and in doing so they attained an inner greatness, an increasing power, and a complete independence. But as long as this split lasted, the worker could take no interest in his work. However he applied his energies, the work was alien to him, in fact hated by him. How this situation led to a great historical movement has been clearly and acutely shown by Marx with the aid of the Hegelian dialectic. According to him the "capitalistic phase" means the first negation of private property based upon one's own work. The course of the



movement has now to negate this negation and to bring on a higher stage by the adjustment of the conflicting elements.

A good deal of this is certainly too dogmatic and summary, but it remains an historical fact that a great part of the race became merely objects and means of labour, not independent subjects; in order to become personalities the whole existing state of things had to be changed. Socialisation is the way to do this. By this means the worker becomes the master, instead of the servant, of his work, and the work can, through the community, attract the interest of the worker. Beyond what is actually achieved, there is a closer union of sentiment, a solidarity of all the comrades. The work loses the impersonal character which they so bitterly resented, or it is at least greatly modified, when a man devotes his whole personality, his whole soul, to the common good, and expresses his own character in his success. We have a confident expectation of a life that will be richer in love and comfort. It is true that religion formerly aimed at this state of things, but its teaching is now disputable and its effort, even where it succeeds, touches the emotions rather than affects the substance of life.

The situation thus brought about by socialisation is in harmony with the whole trend of civilisation. For life everywhere now assumes a super-

individual and super-national character. A world-economy is developing which binds the various nations closer and closer together economically. Our science spreads over the whole world, and even our religions mitigate, if they do not abolish, their old antagonisms. The race seeks salvation more and more in communal life, and arranges its work more connectedly. Now is the time to strive earnestly to bring about the league of nations projected two hundred years ago by that noble philanthropist, the Abbé de Saint Pierre (1713-1717), to make an end of war and its horrible injuries to the common weal, to establish an alliance of mutual profit and friendship between all peoples. Thus the humanitarian sentiments inspired by socialisation give us both a firm and a tangible ground of hope. Working on these ideas, man can advance along purely human lines and find his greatest height in himself.

(f) *The Demand for an Economism.*

Thus socialisation opens out a great prospect. But have we the means to realise so vast a plan? Will not the idealism which we have described be wrecked on the stubbornness of the material conditions which dominate our lives and work? Will not the spiritual fall before the power of the material? Such a fate is inevitable unless material

and spiritual are more intimately combined, and reason takes the lead. This is to be secured by economisation, as Socialism understands it, which is closely connected with socialisation. In this there is to be a full recognition of the overwhelming importance of the economic task, but at the same time the meaning of it is to be altered and ennobled. Let us see what the historic movement has to do in this respect, and what changes the lapse of time has brought about.

At first man was dominated entirely by the need of physical self-preservation. He had to wrest his sustenance from a nature that was sometimes friendly and sometimes hostile, but was at all events indifferent to him. It was only later that other tasks became attractive to him, and acquired an independent value. The first thing was, in the words of Aristotle, to live ( $\zeta\eta\nu$ ); then one might think of living well ( $\epsilon\upsilon\zeta\eta\nu$ ). For this it is necessary for a civilised people to follow a definite line. As is well known, Greek culture has in this respect had a profound influence on us; Aristotle especially has clearly formulated the ideal that has dominated the last two thousand years. He distinguished plainly between the useful, which is concerned only with self-preservation, and the beautiful, which gives life value and joy. The main thing here seemed to be to make the whole range of life active, yet not to leave particular



achievements side by side, but to unite them all in a collective work which should have for its aim the complete satisfaction, the happiness (*εὐδαιμονία*), of all.

This ideal comprises two elements: the substantial content and the conditions of life. The former consists in the inner excellence, whilst the external advantages are, not ends in themselves, but conditions, which take their value from the life-content. At the same time it assigns them a strict limit, and this limit a rational life which is to afford genuine happiness must not transgress. This clear distinction between end and means applied also to the ideal society which Aristotle, in conformity with Greek ideas, conceives as a narrowly limited City-State or communal State. As this State depends on the individuals, the aims of the State are in complete harmony with those of the individuals. Neither individual nor community must make concern about material things its chief business. The indefinite craving of the individual is a lower impulse that must be checked in every way, and all hunting after money for its own sake must be branded a dangerous aberration. And as this ideal regards economic activity merely as a means to higher ends, it does not bring the two together in one whole and cannot recognise any particular economic legislation.

This distinction passed on to the Christian



world. Religion brought about a good deal of improvement and mitigation of the old conditions, but the teaching of Aristotle remained the chief guide, and his attack upon usury was transplanted into Christian soil by Lactantius. The chief concern now, however, was the soul; material possessions were deemed to be of much inferior value. There was much in this that restricted and caused a decay of economic life. It was divided into particular transactions which had no common aim. Labour was confined within narrow channels, and had very limited aims, so that production on a large scale ceased, and great wealth became impossible. The individual was weak, and needed an economic organisation to protect him, as the Guilds did. The mainspring of trade was individual covetousness, and this was enough of itself to restrict the full recognition of economic activity. Thus medieval life had narrow limits. Even in this respect its world was supposed to be settled once for all. There was no impulse to bring about large changes or to set life flowing in a continuous stream.

It is well known that the close of the Middle Ages witnessed a great change. We are, in fact, still in the midst of the movement that was then initiated. There was, in the first place, a new impulse given to life and a technical improvement of the economic life. The fact that life won a

larger control of and action upon the world was bound to modify the estimate of the value of material possessions. From this point onward they ceased to be regarded as mere means and incidental things, and they became integral parts of life. The distinction between means and end is found to be unsatisfactory and not in accord with the realities of life. The inner and outer must rather be in a condition of reciprocity. And as the belief in the possibility of an indefinite enrichment of life makes greater headway against the traditional unprogressive idea, it is felt that material possessions must not merely give occupation to our existing powers ; they must help to make life larger, stronger, and happier. They become so many levers for lifting a dull existence out of its rut and setting it in motion. This leads to a change in fundamental ideas. Hitherto the beautiful had been considered far superior to the useful, but the useful is now cleansed of the stain that it was supposed to have ; it is ennobled and becomes a spur to action. Life as a fixed thing gives place to an idea of indefinite increase of strength ; its increasing rise becomes a further incentive to effort. Men now propose to exploit all resources, open out every possibility, transform life more and more from a small enclosed province into a ceaselessly advancing evolution.

But the complexion of this vital order of power

and progress has materially changed in the course of modern times. It has passed more and more from the immaterial, the ideal, to the material and tangible. The intellectual and speculative activity which opened the modern phase becomes to an increasing extent a mere means of compelling the material world to serve man's designs. The spiritual was at first an independent value, but it is drawn into closer relation to life. The traditional idealism gives place to a resolute realism. This is, doubtless, accompanied, even pervaded, by standards of value, but its chief concern is the visible world.

This state of things gives economic life a preponderance in man's aims and conduct. A man will concern himself only about what can claim full reality; all enterprise must confine itself to this. The older mode of life had greatly depreciated economic life; the new made it the very heart of things. Individual thinkers put it differently, and adopted different lines, but behind them all was the leading characteristic of the time, and it gave an immense productive power to thought. Adam Smith very clearly showed that economic aims, with their concentration upon self-maintenance, entirely dominated the individual, and gave a peculiar complexion even to his work in the spiritual provinces of life—religion, education, etc.—but Socialism carried this beyond the in-



dividual and extended it to the general movement of the world. In this way it founded a special philosophy of history (Engels) which might very well be called economic or materialistic. It purports to have discovered that economic interests are the mainsprings of the historical movement and of all progress ; that it is not ideas, as independent forces, but the interests of life, which control the whole. This not only gave us a new picture of history, and opened out a good deal of surprising insight into the relations between its various processes. It also materially improved conduct, because it plainly indicated and strengthened the chief roots of conduct. Here, quite clearly, appearance yields to reality : imagination is replaced by the force of real powers.

Socialism wholeheartedly adopts this historical movement. Its life has a realistic and empirical character. It confines itself to the world that is directly accessible to us. But it changes the situation considerably because, while it fully recognises the preponderance of the economic element, it transfers it from the individuals and makes it the business of the whole race. In this way the material is ennobled and moralised ; the immaterial is strengthened. The material may be the starting point, even the centre, but it is capable of further development. The two elements combine, as soul and body do, to form a single



and complete reality which promises to meet the wishes of all. The merciless struggle of individuals can thus be transformed by socialisation into a lofty concern for the common weal: indisputable aims can be disentangled from the chaos of conflicting individual designs. In this light material things are seen to be two-edged weapons; they may serve a good or a bad purpose according to the use made of them. They are not used for good by the individual with a subjective intention, however high-minded he may be, but must be employed collectively on Socialist lines. This is the way to settle the old conflict and to make a harmonious whole of life.

Socialism feels that in these ideals it is far superior to the traditional systems. The older order wished to render collective service, but it could not win the co-operation of individuals, and there was therefore a painful clash between the collective aims and the designs of individuals. There was no inner truth in the body as a whole, and it fell into a psychic dualism. This antagonism was abolished by the modern system by making life fluid once more and presenting illimitable possibilities to it, but the forces which had been unchained enter into a new antagonism in the course of time, and we get the antithesis of work and soul which at present rends our life. Socialism promises to end the confusion by completely

reconciling the aim of the whole with the instincts of individuals, by teaching each to regard the whole as his business and his work ; and at the same time it blends the sensuous and the spiritual into a common life under the lead of economic interests. The material is no longer to be regarded in our philosophy of life as something inferior and contemptible. Man ennobles it, and raises the value of reality, by associating it inseparably with the common good. By the co-operation of the two aspects he brings about a Monism of life which is superior to the antithesis of end and means, and he transforms the whole of reality into a progressive evolution. Thus all movements are made to converge to one dominating central point.

Looking back on all that we have so far seen, we realise that Socialism means a turning point such as the world never saw before. It is not that particular things are changed, but the entire process of life has departed from the traditional model. A new epoch has been opened in history. The ideal has even changed our conceptions, and involved very material transvaluations of values. This has, of course, not been done suddenly. Socialism derived its strength largely from the fact that modern times as a whole had experienced great changes ; and these changes were gradual, and often associated with reactions. The specific

work of Socialism was that it raised these partial changes to the position of a whole and a matter of principle, and it boldly deduced the logical conclusions. It takes us back to the simple, elementary, and immediate, yet transforms the whole, and gives life a predominant character of truth and reality, and a reality that can be fully developed only on its own lines.

In the first place this ideal of life demands a concentration of effort under the guidance of a common goal; it will have no breaking up into fragments. It strives to attain this goal in spite of all obstacles, and this of itself furnishes a common standard of value. A further development is yielded by the idea of humanity in its social form. The relation to the universe is set aside, and man is thrown upon his own resources. This leads to a new type of life in every branch, involving ever new demands, and all taken together make up a new sort of reality. This in turn leads to a new frame of mind and new standards of value. The centre of gravity is placed in the present time, and the past is as far as possible converted into the present. The pulse of life beats faster. All separation of classes must be abandoned as far as possible, and all men be treated on a basis of equality. Here again we have to bring reality as near as we can to man and his sentiments. We have, in fine, just seen



how the structure of the whole is completed by a combination of socialisation and economism.

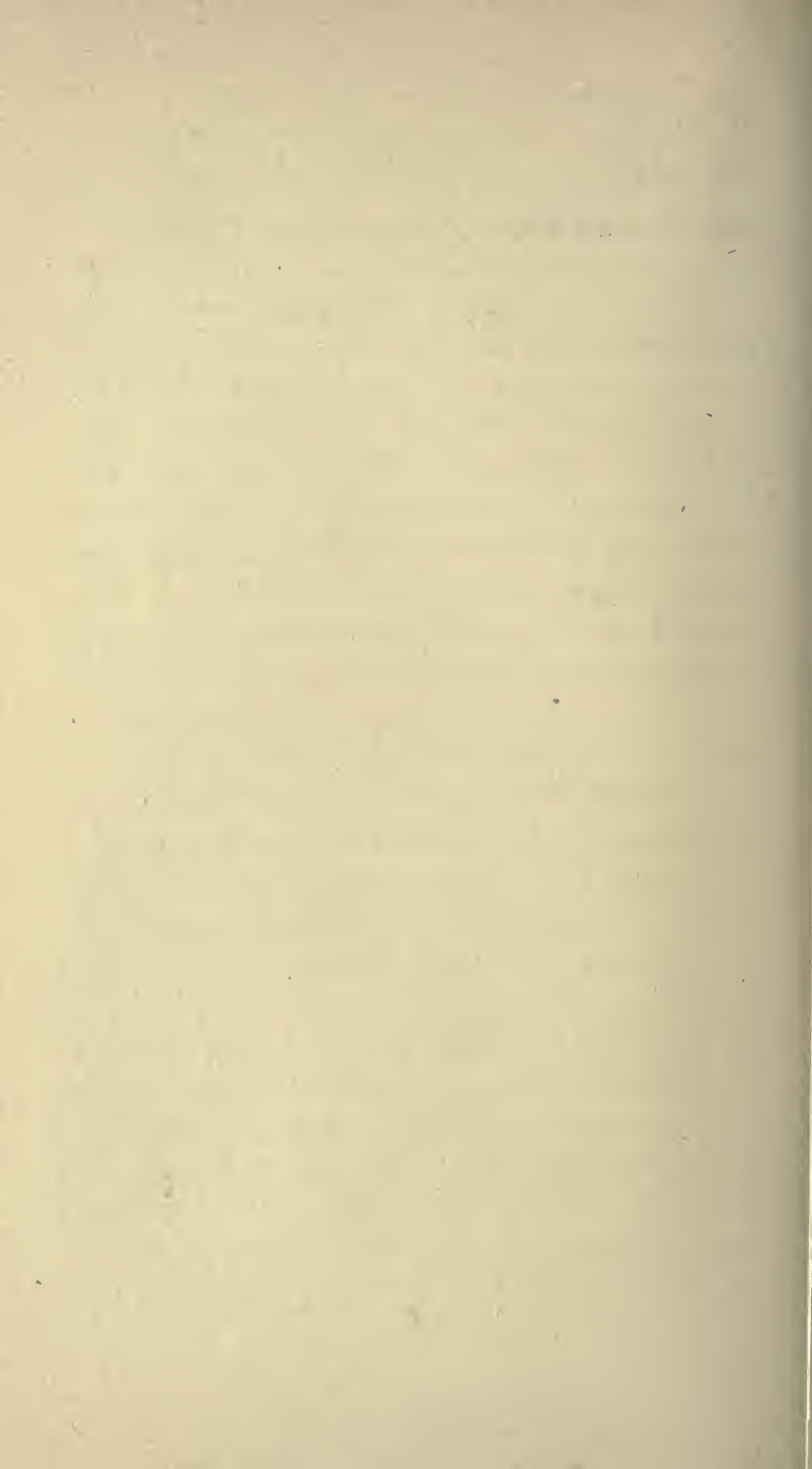
It is characteristic of this system that it appeals to the world of facts, yet has inspired a great movement. That could not be done without rejecting a good many outworn and effete things that had sheltered under the protection of the past. Naturally, this negative feature was at first very much in the foreground, but a close examination of the matter will show that the negation is in the interest of an affirmation. There is much drowsiness to be shaken, much improvement to be made, much misery to be relieved. There is still full truth in the words of Goethe :

“The load of misery and pain yet wrings  
The hearts of men in many a quiet home.  
Outcast they seem—fortune hath cast them out.”

But a new stream of life is flowing. It means a vigorous concentration, a greater animation, of the whole human condition. It combines a firm belief in the power of man, a confident hope of a better future for the race, an untiring zeal for society, a self-sacrificing love of one's fellows. Can we wonder that this ideal spurns the thought of resignation, or that it stirs the souls of men, especially the men who suffer oppression and want ?



**A VIEW  
OF LIFE  
AS A WHOLE**



## CHAPTER III

### A VIEW OF LIFE AS A WHOLE

So far we have allowed the Socialist ideal to speak for itself and to instruct us as to its aims. That is the only way to understand properly both its affirmation and its negation. We have now to form our own opinion on it, and to take up a clear position in regard to what we have seen. For this purpose we require a firm standard of judgment, as otherwise the whole matter is left to parties and individuals with their differences and antagonisms; and we have experience enough to-day of the helpless and intolerable position in which that puts us. But where shall we find this standard if not in man himself? Only human nature in the entirety of its development can rescue us from the chances and changes of opinion and enable us to form an independent judgment upon what is occurring in and around us. But the very thing which promises to help us is at once seen to be itself a problem that

urgently requires examination. We can easily see that the life of man does not run on a single plane. It has various strata and different aims. To understand these strata satisfactorily and plainly distinguish between them is an essential condition of clearing up our own ideas and forming an opinion upon the ideal of life. And when we consider this series of strata, we see that it is only in their graduation that we have a firm standard for judging human life and its conditions. There are three such stages: the fundamental stratum, the condition of human life, and the historical movement.

(a) *The Fundamental Stratum.*

We start from the fundamental idea of life as it is common to man and all other living creatures. Life is a great fact, and at the same time a great riddle that defies every attempt to solve it. The chief point that we have to consider here is the appearance of various stages in it. There is such a thing as a life bound up with nature and a life of spontaneous activity. The former is part of the chain of causation which is reproduced in our experience; the latter is revealed in man alone, having an activity of its own and opening out new relations to man. The one we call nature, the other spirit or



the spiritual world: the one means for us mere existence, the other a world of action. The spiritual world clearly presupposes existence as its foundation, and rises above it as a higher stage.

These two categories have very different features. Existence consists of separate elements which are merely connected externally with each other. The world of action, on the contrary, produces inner connections. Its elements are members of a whole which confers on them a characteristic life. Thus the standards of value of the two stages are quite different. In the one case the elements merely attract and repel each other, and their work is confined to a reciprocal exchange of energy. In the other life is an independent province; it can create a content and engender a self-sufficiency.

This self-sufficiency and creation of a content involve certain demands. They require in the self-sufficiency a certain discrimination, a distinction between object and state. There thus arises an antithesis which is both to be controlled and to be retained, and it will then communicate an inward movement to life. It is only by overcoming this cleavage that life can be complete in itself, be orientated toward itself, engage its own attention, and take itself for its task and work. That this movement is effected

by a cleavage and the maintenance thereof is seen, not only by a thorough examination of the whole situation, but from the fact that it constitutes the two forces, truth and freedom, the great agencies of our effort and makes them inseparable companions. From this arises a characteristic feature of life with which no enterprise can dispense without losing its spiritual character.

*(b) The Vital Condition of Mankind.*

But beyond this fundamental character and its maintenance human life exhibits a special state. It contains acute contradictions which must not be treated as final, but which press us on urgently to further work; though in this they merely evince the incompleteness of the whole situation.

The distinction between nature and spirit, existence and a world of action, is of the essential structure of life; but beyond this distinction there appears a contradiction between the power and the validity of the two. The spiritual purports to be the higher, not merely in the thoughts and hearts of men, but in its creation of special standards and values, even of an independent reality. In our world, however, it is inseparably bound up with nature, and shares its fortunes. The order of nature treats the conduct of the

spiritual being as a matter of complete indifference, and the various phases of life are measured entirely according to the demands of nature. Man may strive to give a certain power to the spiritual in his own province, but, however eager the will, there are limits fixed. What purports to be higher is permanently subject to the power of nature. Great changes in the material world seem to put an end to the spiritual, and seem to make of it merely a concomitant phenomenon. Nevertheless it is impossible for the human effort to sacrifice the independence and intrinsic value of the spiritual life without destroying it at its roots. How shall we escape this contradiction which distracts our lives ?

To this contradiction between nature and spirit we must add an even greater within the psychic life itself. The psychic life exhibits many movements and tendencies, and these tendencies are frequently divergent from and contradictory to each other. The vital instinct may be opposed to the higher aim. Frightful perversions, not merely in individuals, but in the whole race, are not only possible, but actual facts. We thus get the problem of evil. On the one hand it may be held to prove an independence of life, but on the other hand it means a lamentable obstruction and confusion. Human life seems,



not merely in the theories of thinkers, but in its own development to drift into a fierce struggle against itself. How shall we extricate ourselves from this contradiction ?

This profound confusion shows that our human manner of life is not the whole of reality, but a special category of it in a special condition. It must be related to something larger, and only in virtue of this can it possess any meaning and derive the necessary power. Religion adopts this way. It leads beyond a special province to a new stage of life ; a stage that transcends these contradictions and opens out new contents and new forces. Hence the whole of reality which is accessible to men falls into three stages : a fundamental stage, a stage of conflict, and a stage of victorious spirituality. The first is the pre-requisite and foundation of all spirituality ; the second is the chief theatre of man's activity ; the third completes the scheme and promises the power to overcome. It is this last which alone furnishes human life with its indispensable support and an indisputable goal. But this leads to a considerable strain, as the victorious spirituality seeks complete independence and intrinsic value, whilst the province of work shows us spirituality only in a bound condition. This prompts the question which of them it is that mainly decides the character of our world. Will there be an



independent stage of spirituality superior to the world, or will man never pass beyond the condition of severe and unceasing conflict?

Our human realm exhibits this independent spirituality, this complete self-sufficiency of life, only in certain features, but it sufficiently shows that this stage is active in us, and that it is wholly necessary for the spiritual self-preservation of humanity. This is done in two ways: by the construction of a personality superior to and embracing the world and by the opening of a kingdom of God which essentially transcends the entire political and social order. But however unmistakable may be the action of this independent spirituality, its actual shape is determined by the forms and limits of the world of work. Hence a man has to be content with figures of speech and suggestions, and the heart needs a heroism that confidently sustains its affirmation in spite of all contradiction. All these things exhibit the human condition in great achievements, but under very severe restrictions. There is clearly a pervasive movement of the whole, but the condition of the world does not entirely pass into this movement. There is an unquestionable irrationality in reality. Every theory of life must take that into account.

A further stage of the spiritual life arises with the appearance of history, which again is peculiar

to man. We may distinguish between passive and active history : the passive history which merely records what happens to man, the active history which has to do with what he, as a member of a world of action, makes of things and of himself. The combination of the two constitutes human history proper, in which actions and events, deliberate doings and mere happenings, are closely interwoven ; but the driving force is in the deliberate actions. They have a special character. They may do nothing for the whole if they are mere individual achievements ; or they may not be able to pass beyond certain narrow limits without disclosing at once greater and firmer connections and creating independent provinces and realities of life. These vital connections again have a special history. They not only develop an enduring character, but they have to struggle vigorously against resistance, and they can only become full realities after further development and self-experience. In the human field, moreover, they are apt to rise and decay, and they relate a man in various ways to his proper task. At first conduct is greatly influenced by a higher range of facts and connections, such as environment, tradition, and the conditions of life. It is only in the course of time that individuals make themselves completely independent of these, and life as a whole reaches

its highest point. Later, individuals obtain complete control, and they, in the main, fashion the province of life according to their own ideas and aims. Thus in spiritual productiveness we may distinguish an objectivist and a subjectivist stage, or a pre-conscious and a post-conscious stage. But beyond this antithesis and at the decisive point there is a fully conscious height of productiveness, upon which all vital movements converge. Here alone is there an insight into an independent and self-contained reality, a sustained effort, a direct contact with the creative depths of life; here alone can life transcend its temporary limitations and assume a timeless character. These classical heights seem externally to last only a short time. They may be regarded as rare festivals of humanity. But they really have a permanent influence, and thousands of years afterwards they live on their accumulated treasures.

The history of civilisation shows us three great vital contacts of this kind: the ancient world with its emphasis on colour and form, the Christian-religious world with its deepening of souls, and the modern world with its exploitation and intensification of force. In other words, form, character, and force are the chief vehicles of the movement. Each of them attains its peculiar and self-sufficient reality; each of them has its



characteristic procedure, its own experience, and its special aims. They are higher currents of life with which all fruitful productiveness has to come to terms. It is only by contact with these currents of life that one can pass beyond a state of indecisive activity and attain a deep-rooted progressiveness and genuine truth. The movement and conflict of these currents form the theatre of the history of the spirit.

But, whatever these movements may accomplish beyond history, on the historical level the forces wear themselves out. We have to recognise a self-destruction as well as a rise of civilisations. It would mean the tragic end of all human enterprise if the life of the spirit were wholly embodied in the movement of a civilisation ; if there were not a victorious independent spirituality, raised high above, to convert the succession of civilisations into a real co-operation. The work of man has, however, to deal directly with the separate realities of life, and the actual condition of any age is mainly determined by the attitude of the race toward these realities.

### (c) *The Present Situation.*

In relation to these movements the life and effort of the present occupy a very characteristic position. At the moment several different



worlds meet each other in us: conflicting currents struggle with each other around us. The spiritual power that possesses the average man in our day is the spirit of the eighteenth century, with its high appreciation of reason and its special attention to the purposeful and useful. Deriving its chief features from the seventeenth century, it was fully developed, and secured spiritual dominion, in the eighteenth. There was then a furious resistance to it, but in the course of its development it effected most important, in fact decisive, achievements (the *Sturm und Drang* movement, classicism, and Romanticism) the spiritual content of which far transcends the movement itself. While, however, these things have captured the higher intellectual world, they have no influence on the mass of people of our time. It is true that the chief feature of our time is still that of the eighteenth century, though it has in the meantime been very much modified; but there is an undeniable gulf between what appeals to the majority and what is appreciated in higher circles. Even in these higher circles, moreover, there is a lack of unity and continuity, so that it is not strange that in the conflict the masses prevail over the few. The actual condition of life binds us to a good deal to which we feel ourselves superior, yet which we dare not abandon.

Upon this feeble and distracted age there now comes the mighty agitation caused by the stubborn persistence of the social problem and the rise of Socialism to power. This event not only divides the race into opposite camps; it may revolutionise the whole condition of life. Socialism derives great strength from the fact that it wrests the problem of life from the movements, experiences, and wishes of the immediate present, and purports to illumine and refashion everything from a single point of view. All that has gone before is, in its esteem, only a preparation for the present. It confines itself strictly to life as we know it in experience. Man is the centre of the whole: man without any addition or artificial fringes. But he receives his special character and life from his surroundings, his social environment; and his chief task is to bring about a new social order which promises to revolutionise, ennoble, and uplift all the conditions of life. The whole movement of the race tends toward this ideal as to a peak that closes its horizon.

When we turn to a critical appreciation of this movement as a whole, we must first distinguish between the larger idea of the Socialist movement, which is found in all existing nations, and the detailed form which it assumes in any particular nation, especially the German; and

at the same time we must notice the threads which connect the two. We must not lose sight of the peculiar position of the Socialist movement in Germany. Precisely as a result of its victorious progress it has developed many complications in its own body. In the early days the Socialist movement met with stern resistance and a good deal of misunderstanding. It was not without its martyrs. It is not therefore surprising that hopes and wishes went far beyond the possibilities, and that a glorious light poured over everything, that a golden heaven seemed to be opening.

Then experience made itself clearly felt with its difficulties. Once again it was realised that ideas can easily live together in the mind, but things not so easily in space. The happy honeymoon was soon over for Socialism; the limitations of hard facts, and still more of men's minds, became acutely perceptible. It is precisely this fact which makes it necessary, nay imperative, to study the problem of life thoroughly and see how far Socialism is able to meet the spiritual condition of humanity. For in the long run it is human nature as a whole that passes judgment on every attempt to improve it.

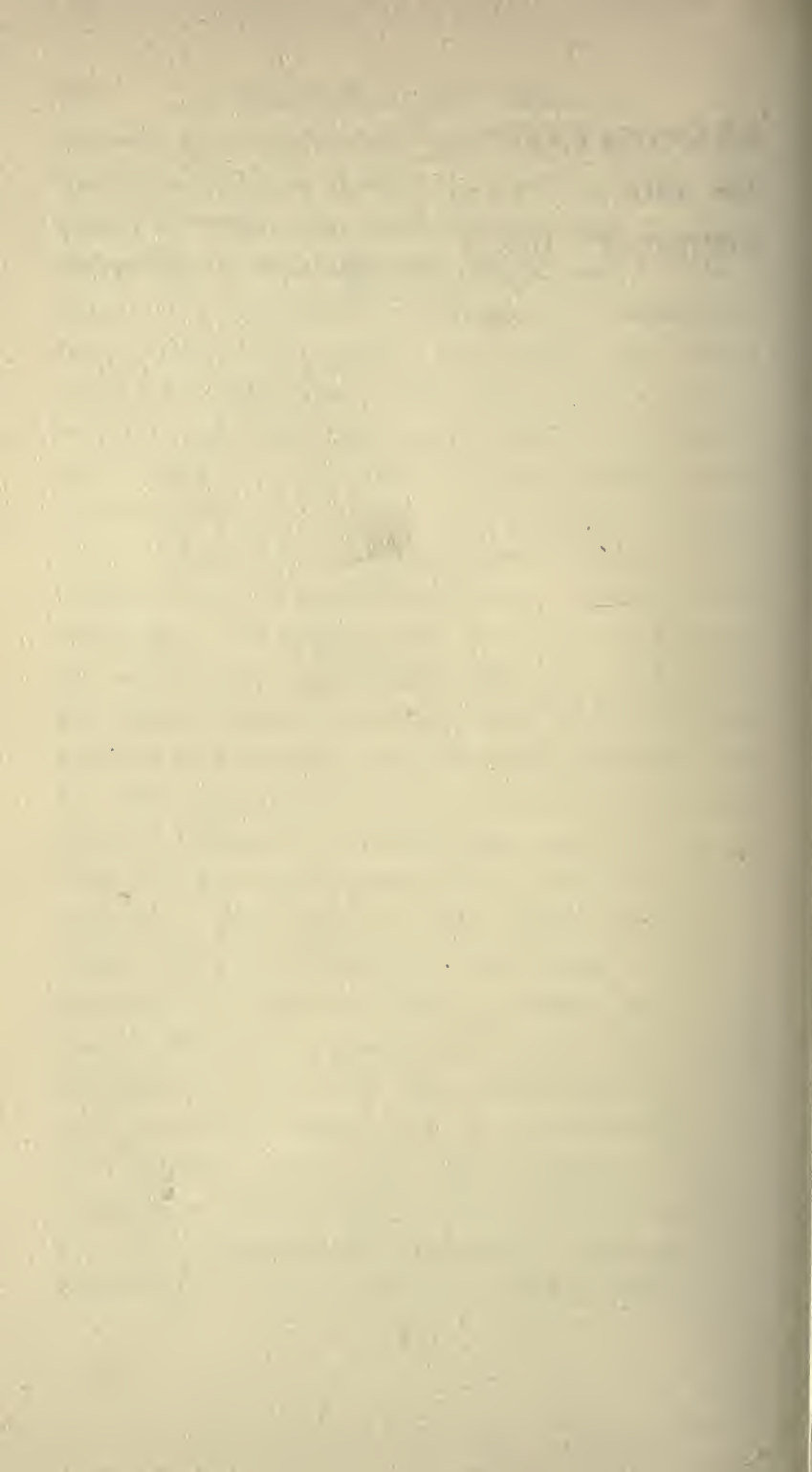
This question cannot be solved unless we bear clearly in mind the chief stages which we found in man's condition. It is absolutely necessary



to compare these stages and their achievements and requirements with the ideal that is put before us. This ideal must meet the demands which life as a whole, with the three chief elements of its graduation, makes on man. We have therefore to inquire (1) whether the deeper layer of human life is seen with sufficient clearness in the chaos of the immediate impression, and whether it provides definite guiding lines for thought and conduct: (2) whether the particular experiences of human nature with all their complexities and contradictions can be adequately recognised, and whether the problems thus raised are capable of a satisfactory solution: (3) how far the ideal offered to us is adapted to the spiritual movement of humanity, and assimilates this into its own work and efforts. It is far beyond my present purpose to answer these questions systematically and deductively, yet we must face them seriously. They must be the main position to which we shall return at every stage, and from the point of view of which we must pass judgment. The chief question is how far the reality presented to us meets the requirements of the case, at what points and in what directions it goes beyond them, and what methods must be pursued in regard to it. It is therefore a question of comparing the necessities which are inherent in our life with the solution offered to



us, and of establishing their rights and wrongs. We will therefore now take in detail the various parts of the Socialist ideal, and enter the very heart of the mighty struggle that is going on around us.



**EXAMINATION  
OF THE  
SOCIALIST IDEAL**





## CHAPTER IV

# EXAMINATION OF THE SOCIALIST IDEAL

### § 1

## THE QUESTION OF THE UNITY AND HARMONY OF LIFE

THERE is not the slightest doubt that humanity to-day urgently needs an inner harmony and a settled goal. Socialism derives considerable strength from the fact that it fully recognises this situation. But the situation is one thing; the remedy of it is another. The Socialist remedy is to make the economic well-being of society our chief aim. To this purpose it subordinates all others; from this point of view it hopes to cover every province of life. In its support it can quote a formidable array of facts. In the first place physical and economic well-being is a necessary condition of human prosperity. Grave evil is done by neglecting it. Further, it

is not a mere question of conditions, but of constant contacts and relations of this side of life to its entire development. The older idealism treated the material, including the economic, as a subordinate requirement, but experience has shown that the material intervenes in the vital development of the spiritual, and that it is far more than a mere means to an end. To this extent it is unquestionable that the different aspects of life must be taken together.

But it is a question whether these things are all on the same plane; whether we have not to distinguish between leading and following groups, and whether our life is not very definitely graduated in stages. Even the economic view of life cannot escape the fact that our life shows a broad division: a life bound up with the senses and a life that is independently active, a merely existing world and a world of action. The one has its roots in sensation, the other in thought.

This leads to different points of view and tendencies. In the one case life is in a world of sense that embraces it; in the other case it may take up an attitude of opposition to the world of sense and follow lines of its own. As a result of this we get radically different standards of value without any common measure. On the one side are instincts, ideas, conditions that do not materially go beyond those of the animals

which are nearest to us : a sheer, blind actuality of events, an unending stream of action and reaction, a casual juxtaposition of elements, a restriction to particular impressions and impulses. On the other side is an effort to attain a connected system of ideas, a power of associating and dissociating, judging and selecting, the emergence of contents which refer life to itself and bind together particular actions by means of common aims. On the one side a predominance of the world of sense with all its fortuitousness and transitoriness and slavery to the impression of the moment ; on the other the capacity to construct one's own plans and carry them through in spite of all obstacles, to control one's impulses from a higher point of view and bring them into subjection to standards of conduct. It is only action of this kind that can oppose the ideals of civilisation to the world of sense, bring it under the dominion of man, convert the mere contiguity of individuals into a firm social order, and link the succession of moments in an enduring history.

It is therefore beyond question that there are different stages in the life of man. These must be brought into relation to each other, but this relation must not be one of direct confluence. There must be a division, so that each type shall develop its peculiar qualities and give effect to them. Merely bringing the two together does



not provide a connection between them or give us a dominant unity. But the connection suggested by Socialism confuses the two stages, and yields no superior and comprehensive unity. All its fundamental ideas are on this account obscured, if not ambiguous.

This is particularly clear in the case of its conception of the collective life, which transcends everything else. This collective life differs entirely according as spirit or nature provides the standard for it and controls its main features. There is a wide difference between a mere society and a community with some internal connectedness ; life is forced to take very different paths in the two cases. If the collectivism of men is merely a matter of living side by side, the various elements may indeed be in contact with each other, but they cannot help each other ; whereas if there is an inner communism, we get the action of a higher whole. If there is mere contiguity, we may have an occasional concentration, but it cannot effect any material changes and improvements. And since these are absolutely required, there must be a force at work in man that is something more than mere existence, a force that engenders a world of activity. Socialism has no means of recognising such a world of action.

The more closely we consider this, the more clearly we discover a flagrant contradiction in the



fundamental elements of its ideal. It wants to create a structure which is superior to the individuals, and all its wishes and hopes are centred in this, but what it constructs can never be more than a bringing together of separate elements without any inner connection. It thus comes to be divided in its own body. Its ideal of the whole demands a world of action, and puts in on the lines of self-direction and spirit ; but in its actual development it imitates the mere contiguity of the material world and is bound up with it. The consequence is that it contains several different ideals of life which are not reconciled with each other. Even the happiness it offers is marred by this division. The whole body is to be as happy as possible ; but what is the nature of the happiness if in the end it means merely the welfare of individuals, if it does not evolve a realm of goodness and truth out of the turmoil of interests and enable human nature to participate in it ? Quantity, it seems, is to replace quality ; but is that done so easily ? Do we not find ourselves in entirely different worlds ? Socialism wants a community, but can only attain a comradeship.

Thus the situation is extremely unsatisfactory as far as unity and connection are concerned. In spite of all concentration the individuals are inwardly separated from each other. If the economic task is held to be a supreme aim uniting

the various provinces of life, this means that their qualities will be restricted and stunted. A certain relation—in fact a union—is proved on one particular level of life, but this level is not the whole of life; it is not even the main level, the level which determines its meaning and value. We have already seen that there are far greater and more difficult duties. We certainly cannot regard the actual situation, with all its contradictions, as final, but we can only escape from it by means of progressive productiveness, an uplifting revolution, a comprehensive remoulding of reality.

The Socialist ideal will not solve this problem. It can find stones for the building and stimulate people to work; but it cannot either design or create the entire structure. Indeed, as regards the problem of the unification of life the Socialist ideal achieves precisely the opposite of what it intended. It wishes to bind men together more closely and make an end of all gulfs between them, but as it builds only from without, not from within, and has no higher life to offer, the individuals will inevitably diverge more and more from each other. Any one of them may impose his conception of life upon the others. There will be an increasing dispersion until in the end some force brings the situation to a close. You get at last the demand for a dictation of

the proletariat ; but what is the use of a dictatorship when there is no supreme dictator ? This Socialist effort to secure unity is only another illustration of the old truth that you get a particularly large amount of conflict out of an inadequate attempt to bring about unity. Socialism therefore does not go deep enough into the roots of life. It overlooks the immense complications, and also the immense possibilities, that human life bears within itself. Instead of the whole of life it takes up only a certain section ; a section that may in special circumstances passionately agitate the race, but can never permanently satisfy it. Real unity can never be attained by bringing individuals together externally. It can only be secured by a high and comprehensive world of action. This only will enable us to rise above our actual situation.



## § 2

### EXAMINATION OF THE SOCIALIST IDEALISM

SOCIALISM hopes to bring about more unity in life by directing efforts immediately to man and his welfare, making him the measure of all things, and removing from him all restrictions and interferences. This concentration upon man is in harmony with one of the chief features of modern life in the sense that the elevation of man to the position of central point of the spiritual movement distinguishes our age clearly from earlier ages. Formerly man was regarded as a member or a part of a comprehensive whole, whether this was held to be the universe (cosmos) or a kingdom of God. In either case the whole seemed to give life its substance and its value. Our age, on the contrary, starts from man, and seeks to understand the world through him and distribute life according to its own powers. This modern tendency, however, passes through various stages and has had very varied results. The chief aim of it was to bridge the gulf which had been caused by the division



into a simple and a spiritually active stage between man and the world. This was first attempted intellectually in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. They thought that they were strong enough to bind the two closely and conduct their vitality to man.

Kant's critical system, with its disintegration of the idea of reality, altered all this. It placed the centre of gravity of life in moral conduct, which thus rose to the rank of an independent world and ascribed to human nature and its freedom an infinite value, though it did not include the whole substance of life. The separation that was thus effected led in a remarkable way to a speculative attempt to derive the whole of reality from man's productive powers. As time went on it was found that this was an excessive strain of man's faculties, and thus man and the world fell apart, and the problem of their relation arose once more.

In the meantime a situation had developed which tended to confine man more and more to his own circle. In the eighteenth century itself the world at large came to be considered more and more merely the environment of the human province. Then Positivism gave a scientific form to the feeling, cut the inner connection of man with the world, and restricted interest entirely to the human sphere. Socialism follows the

same tendency, but it completes it by a stronger emphasis on man's own achievements, as we see them in the subjection of nature by scientific and technical work and in the construction of a new social order. Thus armed, man seems to be in a position to rely entirely upon himself and secure truth and happiness for his life.

But this is not done quite so easily and smoothly as it would appear. Such a solution has profound consequences both for man's inward condition and his activity. It imposes upon him certain limits which cannot be satisfactory to any thoughtful person. When a man is thrown entirely upon himself, the only goal he can set up is his own comfort and welfare, the happiness of his subjective experience. But this goal is quite inadequate for any thoughtful man whose mind is fully developed. According to Socialist ideas it often looks as if a life not overburdened with work, free from care, and attended by intellectual enjoyment would meet all one's requirements. It may seem so to men who are overburdened with work and have to struggle hard for their maintenance, but this can be regarded as a final state only by the man who treats his spiritual nature as a thing of no consequence and spiritual activity merely as a luxury and distraction, not as an inward necessity, a compelling impulse to self-maintenance. The spiritual

activity loses its power to uplift when it is regarded as simply an appendage to a life that is of a fundamentally different character. Even the finer type of comfort and enjoyment will, in a detached subject, turn into an inward emptiness, which in the long run will prove less tolerable than care and want, struggle and pain. Ancient Epicureanism showed this two thousand years ago, and Socialistic Epicureanism will show the same thing.

To meet this intolerable emptiness men turned to work, in order to derive from it a worthy aim for their lives. The nineteenth century in particular produced a fine and very successful idealism of work in this sense. With a feverish exaltation of all its forces and a concentration of all its interests it brought the whole of life into subjection to work, but its very success made its defects clear to everybody, and awakened fresh concern about the soul. That put wind into the sails of Socialism, but, as it recognised no soul beyond one's subjective experience, it could give man as a whole no purpose and no substance. The average man therefore remained in a state of restless and helpless vacillation between the two movements. Such distraction and emptiness could not possibly produce great personalities or excite original productiveness.

The problem is now clear to all. Above and



beyond all particular questions and tasks is the problem of man as a whole. It can only be approached with any prospect of success if we take it in its historical connection and bring about a real revolution. We need new possibilities : a new attitude of man toward reality. The men of earlier times started from the world as a whole, and life was thus deprived of its full freedom and originality ; we of modern times started from freedom and originality, and our life had no firm substance or settled truth. It threatened continually to fall into the merely subjective and personal. We have now to bring freedom and truth closer together. That can only be done by radically altering our conception of man and bridging over the gulf between him and the world, by recognising in man himself a cosmic life and raising him from the depths of his being to a creative height. This gives us a new idea of man as a whole. It includes the two stages, nature and spirit ; but it is characteristic of the spiritual stage that it brings together the individual element and the collective life, and in combination they form an independent vital concentration, a spiritual energy, which is essentially different from that of the elements in nature owing to its being based upon collective life..

The fact that there is in man an individual element as well as a cosmic life, and that some



relation between the two is possible, gives us a distinctive life-process which must control the shaping of our ideals. It is only when productivity is not opposed to the world, but kept within it, that the conception of the content of life has any clear meaning; only then can there be a construction of reality; only then can the wild desire of life be tamed and, amidst the strain of action, a self-containedness of life, an inner unity, a calm outlook, an independent productivity become possible. The chief provinces and tendencies of life—science and art, religion and law—do then not mean the work of detached points, but they are witnesses to a higher collective force. It is true that such an advance as this can, in view of the limitations of human nature, only proceed gradually, but the main fact remains, that there is in man a movement toward these goals, and that it reveals to us a new relation of reality to the whole.

There may even be collective experiences which are at the same time direct experiences of man as a spiritual being. The antithesis of truth and freedom may no longer trouble us with its discord, because man, as the agent of a productive life, may directly share in both. In such a situation his life acquires an indubitable meaning and a high value. There are other consequences, of various kinds. In such a situation as this a

spiritual culture may succeed in overcoming the antagonism of work and concern for one's welfare. From this point of view also we can successfully meet the intellectualism which has done so much harm in modern times. Intellectual activity may still remain one of the chief parts of the spiritual life, but it is within, not opposed to, a higher productivity. Man and the world no longer diverge from each other ; they are bound together by an inner movement. Mankind is no longer lonely, abandoned in a dark and inaccessible world ; this movement may bring light and make the connection closer. This gives us a new idea of life and civilisation, based upon a new idea of the world and strengthening this by its power.

All these problems find the Socialistic ideal without a solution. When it tries to solve them it falls into serious errors. The last term of these errors is the humanitarian idealism which pervades the whole ideal. It treats man as a superior value, and it wants to direct every effort toward him ; but it can find no basis for this value. It falls into the contradiction of treating man as a mere piece of reality and transferring to this piece of the world that appreciation which belongs only to a standard of value.

This procedure is always dangerous, as it attributes the claims of the ideal man to the empirical man. This is bound to lower considerably every standard

of life and inspire a superficial optimism. It also causes a disposition to shelve all problems that are very difficult, and to cast as far as possible upon the external circumstances of life the complications which it cannot ignore. In this way friend and foe are apt to be judged by different standards. It seems sometimes as if misunderstanding were confined to opponents, and the members of the party were considered blameless and faultless. Let us rather have a firm faith in the spiritual and divine in human nature, and not this blind belief in man's ordinary self.

Socialistic idealism is eager to ensure the progress as far as possible of individuals, but it injures the race by lowering the standard, and, when that is done, individuals also must suffer. We have painful evidence of the result daily. In fact, this confusion of human nature with man's actual condition makes the life of the whole community vapid and one-sided. The Socialist ideal has certainly the great merit of bringing men into closer association and making them stronger and more active in this way. There is still much to be done in this important direction. But the work ought to be preceded by the generation of spiritual standards and forces. It must not be the first task, though it has an indisputable right to the second place. We must not measure spiritual standards by ordinary human nature, but the



reverse. We cannot make man the standard without regarding his welfare as the supreme goal, without making everything relative and subjective, without treating the inward state of life as a secondary matter, without appreciating all that is done only in so far as it contributes to the comfort of the individual.

While, therefore, the Socialist ideal will remove many evils and effect many improvements, promote education, and mitigate the crudities and injustices of the existing order, it remains true that its tendency to treat the spiritual substance of life merely as a means to advance the welfare of men is very injurious. Spirit or man, uplift of human nature or the welfare of individuals—that is a question that will not be evaded. Socialism decides for man. But all spiritual activity that is not regarded as an independent value is lost ; as a mere means this kind of life cannot attain the inward compulsion, the inner joy and uplift, the power of self-preservation, so that the soul be moved to grasp it, and turn it into original and constructive activity. Such a life is condemned to spiritual sterility. It does not sufficiently rouse man from his lethargy and stagnation. It places before the soul no inexorable “ Either—Or.” It may be fully occupied with political and social questions and devote a passionate zeal to them, but it brings down every question to the level



of the politics of the day, of economic interests, of parties; it does not consult the inner man, the entirety of human nature. But what will become of man when material things are all to him? When he loses himself by always looking outwards?

All this has led to a great deal of confusion in the appreciation of man. Different ages had different conceptions. It was quite natural that in certain special circumstances man turned to himself and tried to strengthen himself in his own nature. So it was in the last phase of the ancient world, when the idea of humanity gave great strength; so in modern times, when it helped to increase the feeling of life. We can quite understand that in the grave inner and outer struggles of modern times many seem to find in the idea of humanity a more joyous outlook and a much-needed consolation. But how frail and tottering our support has now become! In the later phase of ancient times and in the eighteenth century the idea of humanity was firmly based upon a theory of a higher cosmic reason. It seemed to speak to souls as a strengthening and directive force. But for most of us this theory is now an empty phrase, and we see no substitute for the power it exerted.

There is, in fact, to-day over wide areas of life a positive dislike of man, a *taedium generis humani*,

as it was called in the last days of the ancient world. We have at one and the same time the evil of overpopulation, the concentration of men in cities, the economic struggle, and so on. We have not space enough. One man is the enemy of another. Above all our particular questions we feel the power over men of the trivial, the common, the evil. The idea of a superman occurred to some; but can thought alone get over realities and their power? So the human problem finds us involved in a terrible complication, and the Socialist ideal cannot extricate us. The situation would be hopeless if there were not higher forces working in man, making more of him, unsealing old and new springs of life to him. At present, however, we are merely searching.

### § 3

## EXAMINATION OF THE SOCIALIST CONCEPTION OF HISTORY

ONE of the chief sources of the strength of Socialism was that it turned life entirely into an affair of the present. It proposes to test thoroughly all that has been handed down to us, to reject everything that is antiquated, to have nothing but truth in our ideas and institutions. As true it regarded only what immediately affects and moves man. This was to give freshness and power to life. There is no question but that in our life, where the past so often hampers the present, we have a great deal to do in this respect, and it was quite right to appeal decisively to the present. But we shall now see, as we have seen in so many connections, that Socialism conceives the problem in a short-sighted and partial way, and that all the stimulation that it can afford does not outweigh the harm it does to the substance of life.

We must first recognise that all great revolts against the traditional are particularly apt to



show us its seamy side, and this was bound to be especially true of an attitude which based life, as the eighteenth century did, upon independent reason. We must also remember that the masses, who are the strength of Socialism, know very little about history, and live almost entirely in the present. But we must now see that this unhistorical attitude gives us a false idea of reality and leads to narrow-mindedness.

Socialism proposes to make life entirely a matter of the present. What does it mean by the present? What are we to understand by it? Does it mean merely the actual moment? Is this enough for us? In that case there would be no firm structure in our life. Our work and institutions would merely reflect our casual and individual moods and opinions. Our conduct would change from time to time just as each season has its new fashions. No one would admit this in so crude a form; but can we escape the consequences of the attitude? If life has no permanent support, and is surrendered entirely to the stream of development, it breaks up into particular impressions; and in that case there is, strictly speaking, no present. For a thoughtful person there can be no present without continuity. It must have some sort of substance and must impart this to man's conduct. Such a person cannot receive a present from without; it must be his own work—his merit or his fault.



We have therefore to distinguish between the momentary present and a genuine present. And a genuine present needs a history. It is unintelligible unless it has an element of history in it. It is not a dead past, a mere memory that occupies our minds at times ; it is not a mere matter of learning. It belongs directly to the present and is inseparable from it.

Take a fully civilised nation. Its collective life requires permanent institutions and aims. It needs permanent connections, common experiences of joy and sorrow. These connections were generally formed gradually, and often with much trouble. They are valuable because they weld the individuals together and keep common aims before them, in fact infuse into them a common spirit.

Such a collective creation is, for instance, a national army ; the outcome of a long series of generations through several centuries. Such also, is a national administration. Continuities of this kind often have their sharp corners and angularities. They may be very trying, and there are distinct weaknesses in their strength. But they give a firm direction to the lives of large bodies of men. They embody definite aims, and they strengthen the collective labours. They are not vague ideas, accidents, but distinctive modes of thought and developments. They engender special forces and

feelings, such as honour, bravery, devotion, and incorruptibility. They put a check on lower impulses, and free a man from the control of fleeting moments and varying moods. They are real life-forces. It is only a superficial optimism that can treat them as of no importance. These life-forces are difficult to build up and easy to destroy. The loyalty and steadiness they embody are things of value, the destruction or enfeeblement of which may leave great gaps in our life, as we have recently experienced.

A nation without tradition is not a complete entity. It has no shadow of its own. The quality of its education, the force of its legislation, depend in great part upon its tradition. As Sir J. G. Frazer says: "Only a legislation which is in harmony with a nation's past has the power to build up a nation's future. . . . There must be in every law, as in every plant, an element of the past." Living history and dead past are two totally different things. A nation that disowns its history must disown its own nature, deny itself. It is, in a word, a miserable nation.

How does the Socialist ideal stand in this respect? It does not sufficiently discriminate in dealing with history. It does not distinguish between a passive history, which merely stores actual events in the memory and does nothing further with them, and an active history, which

is concerned with man's work and aspirations. Active history belongs to the world of deeds, not to mere existence. It is this alone that can bring out the full value of living history. But Socialism, with its dependence on passive history, cannot pass an impartial judgment. It is apt to use a double standard in judging the old and the new. It sees only the good in the new and only the bad in the old, and it at times becomes a mere caricature. In human affairs everything has its seamy side, and it is very easy to give prominence to this and make it the basis of a verdict. It is, to say the least, bad taste when even well educated men speak of the traditional and deep-rooted order of things as a mere "authoritative State." In Prussia, certainly, the idea of authority was often overstrained; but is that all that we can say even of Prussia, with its stern insistence on duty, its subordination of individuals to collective purposes, its unflinching industry, its conscientiousness and attention to detail and incorruptibility? It seems sometimes as if most Germans had lived without any liberty until the recent revolution had brought it to them. The liberty which the old order gave, far beyond the party-programs, is entirely forgotten. And it is equally forgotten that each great civilisation has its own idea of liberty. Our Radicals are too apt to confine themselves to the French



idea of liberty and take pride in imitating it as far as possible. They have no conception of the deep meaning of the German idea of freedom.

This ignoring of what is great in our character and our achievements is found in every department of life. It often looks as if our educational system, to which whole centuries have contributed zealously, were in such a condition that it needs a revolutionary reform. In other respects also we have forgotten that Germany was the first of all nations in social legislation for the workers, and that this implied great sacrifices. It seems to some people a mark of intellectual superiority to decry our institutions.

One of the chief reasons for this error in underestimating real achievements is that in our daily life we treat many things as self-evident which are by no means self-evident, but which have cost a good deal of trouble and labour and even self-sacrifice. People would not speak so lightly of Christianity if they did not forget what a task it is to hold men together inwardly and control the lower impulses which drive us. There is the same carping disposition in regard to the State. What Hegel said is true of both State and religion : "Education begins always with censure, but, when it is complete, it sees the positive in everything." That is particularly true in periods of great change, such as ours. The course of the



movement shows clearly enough that a good deal that we are accustomed to treat as self-evident is not self-evident, but "custom makes the very basis of our existence invisible" (as Hegel says). Nothing betrays more clearly the deterioration of the whole condition of life when what was formerly regarded as self-evident becomes a great task. How does our own time stand in this respect?

Inequality in the treatment of various periods is accompanied by a similar treatment of ages. Youth is extolled as much as possible: age is depreciated as much as possible. The young seem to be more alert, less prejudiced, keener on freedom, more productive. They are the sole hope of the future and must take precedence. The larger experience and riper judgment of the old count for nothing in comparison. In this Socialism is very one-sided and short-sighted. There can be no doubt that life as a whole requires a certain equilibrium, a remedying of the faults of each age by the other. Who does not share Luther's wish, that the young might be wise and the old strong? Each age has its advantages and its weaknesses, and it is wrong to see only the advantages of the one and only the weaknesses of the other.

There is also the confusion of the physical and the psychic, which pervades all Socialist thought.

In this respect different ages have different qualities. A physical youth may be spiritually feeble and dull, while years alone give no advantage. Times that are full of strength and endowments can inspire even what is physically old with youthful courage. As in all other respects, it depends entirely upon what spiritual force makes of a man. The number of years is nothing in itself. This is not a matter in which you can measure by the yard.

The same attitude which leads to an exaggerated estimate of the spiritual present is also apt to make the pulse of social life as slow as possible. Here again we have a difficult and important problem. Just as the bodily processes depend upon an equilibrium between acceleration and retardation, so even the psychic life needs both, and it is one of the chief merits of statesmanship to steer the ship of State prudently between Scylla and Charybdis, and to find the right point for action. In Germany the chief danger in the political world is undoubtedly to delay too long in realising proposals: to consider matters very thoroughly—too thoroughly—and then suddenly break out in momentous actions, as the hasty beginning of the late war showed.

The fault of Socialist ideas is not of this kind. It wants to renovate the world at once, and does not sufficiently consider whether the change

is really an improvement. It also forgets too easily the conditions of success, since it relies entirely upon the intellect and entrusts the decision to it. Important decisions such as the promulgation of a new code of laws or a new system of education ought to be preceded by a conscientious and thorough consideration of the question whether our age is sufficiently firmly rooted in its convictions and clear as to its objects to find the necessary force and confidence for such an enterprise. Otherwise a mere wind will blow away the traces of our work. The popular parliamentary form of government is little fitted to determine the proper rate of action. Unimportant questions are often drawn out according to the favour or mood of parties, while important questions are hastily decided. New measures about telephones are of deep interest to our overburdened middle class, yet a small majority in a thin House passes such measures and others of great importance.

All these things bring us back to the great problem of the relation between thought and experience, the present and history. Modern times here confront a formidable problem without being able to solve it or to disentangle itself from sharp antagonisms. We want to settle everything by our own ideas and actions, to enter upon every enterprise in a spirit of independence. This



unintelligible wish was, however, checked at the beginning, because mere thinking, the form of life, was chiefly entrusted with the execution. In earlier ages it was based, not upon man's mere intellect, but upon absolute thought. It had firm foundations such as "innate ideas." The mind rested upon, and was supported by, the truth of God.

English thinkers of the seventeenth century, especially Locke, brought about a great change. Innate ideas were discarded as an error. The connection with absolute reason was lost. Reason sank from a spiritual to a human level, and thought lost all its independence. It had to draw upon experience for its entire contents; it could offer no resistance from its own powers to the stream of impressions and impulses; it acted like soft wax under all influences. When this empirical theory was fully developed, and followed to its logical consequences, independent science became impossible. Its claim to general validity and necessity was unsound. All thought became mere presentation, either on the part of individuals or of the masses which they made up. The mental compromise of modern times shrinks from this logical conclusion and its denials, and relies upon a blend of thought and experience; but the mixture is useless. Socialism shares this vacillation between empty thought and concrete impressions, and it



can therefore take up no definite position in regard to the contents of history. It rejects history when it is not in harmony with Socialist ideas, but adopts it willingly when it promises to be of any use. This means that the Socialist judgment is based upon, not realities and their requirements, but immediate impressions and party-interests.

Take, for instance, the German universities. They belong in origin to the Middle Ages and do not fit in the scheme of the modern State. It is not difficult to find in them much that is antiquated. But with these antiquated features is intimately connected that which gave their life an independence and their work an originality, and won the esteem of the whole civilised world. Ought we not to seek the reasons for their good work and improve it as far as possible rather than make a parade of their defects? We may draw a distinction between the irrational and the unreasonable. Much that seems to be irrational may, when it is closely considered, serve a deeper reason. Historical life, with its combinations and institutions, is full of an irrational element. The whole of reality known to us is pervaded by a stern struggle of the rational and irrational, and the rational must in the end be based upon a life of activity, a creative will, and derive its substance therefrom. But in all these things Socialism follows the line

of the eighteenth century, not of the twentieth. It cannot therefore come into close touch with history ; its standards are too small for the fulness of reality.

The limits of the Socialist ideal must be clear to any man who does not merely float helplessly with the current of historical events, but takes up a point of view of his own and surveys the whole from that. It is an indubitable fact that man does not live entirely within the limits of time. By means of his thought and his spiritual life he can transcend time and grasp something eternal, progressive, present, in the things of time. Consider an historical phenomenon such as Christianity. It was an issue of special conditions, of a very troubled and distracted age ; but is it on that account merely a product of that troubled age, which we ought to get rid of ? Has it not produced permanent experiences, achievements, and objects, with which even we cannot dispense ? Is not the moral antithesis under which it presents the life of man not a permanent thing ? Can we sacrifice the great earnestness, the impelling and rousing force, the revelation of higher powers and original sources of life, which it gave to the world ?

We cannot do this without depriving man of something great, of an indispensable spiritual help. It is the same with classic Greece. Its time was

limited, the period of its bloom short ; but this brief period produced eternal values without which modern civilisation would be greatly impoverished. How far different ages and individuals will assimilate these vital contents is another question. They are certainly not dead things, but living possibilities, permanent requirements, facts which, once brought into the human sphere, can never disappear from it. Any man who looks beyond these questions to a timeless world will remember Goethe's words :

“The man who from three thousand years  
No lesson for his life can wrest  
Lies in the dark, in inexperience,  
Trudging his way from day to day.”

Something beyond the historical breaks upon a man in history. In the human chronicle we detect a chronicle of the spirit, which puts us in a new order, in a life with eternal relations (*sub specie aeternitatis*). Whilst wave follows wave in human history, without any connection between them by higher aims, the history of the spirit undertakes to give life substance and value and independence, to find it support as well as continuity. It is only from this point of view that something like an organisation of history can be obtained, and that primitive revelations of life may be distinguished from each other and combined in the whole. From this point of view



there must be a complete return of life from the immediate things of sense to the immediate things of the spirit. It is only a confirmed change of this kind that can prevent our whole human effort from drifting into the current of mere evolution and sinking, after a brief spell of brightness, into the abyss of nothing ; and that is true both of the individual and the race.

But these problems, which are essential to the spiritual life, do not exist for Socialism. It is concerned entirely with the historical movement which is due to mere existence. Its work has no spiritual background. Everything it does affects only the limited surface of life. The "materialistic" philosophy of history of Marx and Engels does not go beyond this. Yet all this must not prevent us from recognising that Socialism has done much valuable work in the province of empirical history by means of its criticisms, its liberation from restrictions, and its rejection of superfluous ballast ; though even in this province it applies standards that are too narrow, and it lacks that sense of justice which is above all party strife.



## § 4

### THE LIMITS OF SOCIALIST EQUALITY

THE idea of equality is one of the chief elements of the Socialist ideal, and it has had a great influence upon both thought and conduct. Its principal aim is to attack all artificial distinctions, to get rid of all imaginary and unjustified privileges, to meet all obstacles and disturbances with the idea of our common human nature as a settled basis. When this is not done, the forces of progress are dammed, the consciousness of inter-connection is lowered, and a man's joy in his work is destroyed. It is a question, not merely of individual actions, but of fundamental convictions and whole systems of thought. We shall see, however, that here again Socialism conceives the matter superficially, and that it encounters many obstacles; and that sometimes it attains a result the opposite of what it had intended. There are, in particular, the following points that require explanation.

1. At the very basis of this idea of equality

there is a contradiction which is dangerous to the whole structure. What is the root, the moral title, of the idea of equality? Is it in a higher spiritual order or in the province of experience? The older idea of equality chose the former alternative. It was rooted in God as the source of all life or in reason as a cosmic force; but Socialism has nothing to do with these things. God it regards as a mythological idea: in reason it sees a product of human presentation which cannot transcend its own sphere. There remains experience alone to justify the claim of equality.

But experience shows us men unequal everywhere; nature and civilisation are at one in making life more and more unequal. Now experience is for Socialism the source and justification of all ideas, and this puts it in the following dilemma: If it recognises any sort of equality of all human beings, it must appeal to some kind of spiritual force and run counter to experience, whereas if it adheres to experience, it must follow it and shape its conduct and claims by it. This contradiction is inevitable unless experience can bring about, empirically, a complete equality of all men and conditions. This would be, if logically carried out, thorough Communism as proposed by Babeuf, and indeed Communism is the most logical form of Socialism. But how mankind and civilisation would fare under such a system we need hardly

inquire. It follows that there is no possibility of reconciling reason and experience in the problem of equality. Nietzsche saw more clearly than most of his contemporaries when he said that the disappearance of the idea of God deprives the idea of equality of all justification.

2. The decisive question is whether the collective life is in one or two stages : that is to say, whether differences all lie on one plane, or whether it is possible and desirable to have a gradation of such a kind that some higher unity stimulates the individual elements to action and influences them by its own powers. A one-stage structure will refer all life and conduct directly to the individuals and forbid any differentiation of society. Communism is, on that ideal, the simplest and most direct way. On the other hand, in a two-stage structure it is possible to have adjustment and combination. A higher whole is active, but the individual may regard this whole as his own affair, and may feel that, however subordinate he may be, he is a member of the whole. It is, in fact, only on such a basis that we can have the ideas of right and duty. The one-stage theory puts the right of the individual before duty, and it is plain that in such a case the idea of right itself has no rights ; that the decision rests with might, not right. It is only a two-stage order that can guarantee independence both to the whole and



to the individual elements. The individual will, of course, have a secondary position in it, but as a member of the whole he will be more than a mere point, and he will feel that he is co-operating with the whole. Look at the structure of the Catholic Church. Each individual priest may, in virtue of his ordination, regard himself as a co-operating element of the whole and therefore ascribe the highest value to his action, but this does not in the least prevent him from occupying a very modest place in the structure.

The Socialist ideal vacillates between a one-stage and a two-stage structure, because it clings to the idea of a whole, but regards it merely as a collection of individuals, and can therefore give it no independent content. It falls inevitably under the power of the individual elements, the mere aggregation of which it cannot overcome. The prosperity of the whole must be measured by the interests of the individuals, and this is in flagrant contradiction to the main idea. This identification of an aggregation of individuals with an independent whole is bound to lead to contradictions and confusion at every step.

Let us take the suffrage, for instance. The State as a whole is bound to seek such an arrangement as will best serve its purposes and its interests. The individuals as so many rational beings endowed with independence must not, it is true, be for-



gotten in this arrangement, but the decision rests mainly with the whole. It was a sign of the incipient dissolution of the traditional order when a Prussian minister described adult suffrage as a fundamental right of all. In the prevailing confusion of ideas he himself scarcely noticed that he was rejecting the basic principle of the Prussian State—the subordination of the individual to the whole. This question, whether the individual is to get everything directly and in virtue of his association in the whole, has very serious consequences for the complexion of the collective life. The educational system will have different features according as a collective state, superior to the individuals, sets up a sphere of common instruction or the curriculum is to be as far as possible equally applied to individuals. A good deal cannot be given equally to all, but it is not the less important to the whole on that account. Higher mathematics cannot possibly be communicated to all; not merely from lack of time, but from lack of ability for it. Are we to think less on that account of the value of higher mathematics? Civilisation would be incalculably impoverished if we were to judge things by that standard. In this as in other respects we see that it is to the interest of the whole to divide the collective life into a higher and a lower stage.

Such a division is objectionable only when it

is made in the interest of certain classes, not of the whole. It is based upon the need of entrusting the care of the spiritual self-preservation of mankind to a limited group of individuals. This class cannot exist and do its work properly unless it is in vital relation with the other classes, unless it has a tradition, and unless it is freed from the cares of material life. It needs also very thorough methods of thought, not merely a number of individual achievements. And are we to abandon all this for the sake of the illusion of a classless society which would soon prove to be without culture and spirituality? Even the individual elements fare better when there is a gradation. It is only an extraordinary sort of optimism that can look for the salvation of humanity by any other method. Aristotle, in his clear and penetrating way, pointed out long ago the logical fallacy of Communism. It is in the ambiguity of the word "all." It suggests not only all taken together, but each taken by himself (*πάντες ὡς ἕκαστος*); and this gives the idea of a common possession two different meanings. In few cases has passion been so stirred by a fallacy as in this case. Socialism, with its talk about the whole while it puts the sum of individuals instead of the whole, finds itself in an untenable middle position.

3. This recognition of an essential difference between society as a whole and the sum of its

elements enables us to appreciate fully the diversity of the conditions of life, as experience presents them to us. Socialism regards this diversity as a matter of no consequence. It gives us an inaccurate version of it, and ignores the significance of the various starting points and lines which it affects to conduct. It was the special strength of ancient thought that it clearly described these vital conditions in their entirety. This was in harmony with its tendency to regard reality as realm of self-contained forms and to demand perfectly sharp frontiers. In this, it is true, it often conceived the distinctions too rigidly; it overlooked connecting shades between definite types, and did not sufficiently recognise the changes and developments of phenomena in all their fluidity. In particular, it did not do full justice to the infinity of the individual.

Yet the fact remains that experience shows us a great diversity of movements and tendencies. This diversity may serve us as a means to make life fluid and tractable, and at the same time to give us more nearly correct views of it. Obliterating these differences and antitheses easily leads to a dreary monotony. The thinkers of antiquity agreed in distinguishing between a nobler and an ordinary frame of mind: one directed to the beautiful, and one to the useful. In the one case conduct found satisfaction in itself: in the other it looked



to external objects. From the soul of this older culture came the words of Aristotle: "It is the part of a free and high-minded man to seek, not the useful, but the beautiful." This acute student of men has ably described the chief types of human conduct, and has distinguished five principal shades of thought and character: great, good, those who love honour and power, those who are intent on gain and enjoyment, and, finally, criminal natures. The truth of this division is supported by the fact that it has been substantially preserved in the tradition of the Catholic Church. In all this there is a good deal of knowledge and experience of life that we do not find in people who talk about equality.

Reference to this diversity brings us to the problem of greatness, which was much discussed in ancient times, and has been much discussed in our own day. The older thinkers meant by it especially a superiority to fate and the accidents of life: modern thinkers lay more stress on the power of original production.

They agree, however, in recognising that greatness is rare and exceptional, and that it differs in quality, not merely quantitatively, from the common type; and this gives us a characteristic view of the process of life. Genuine creativeness is not a precipitate of the average mass. It derives its power from its own soul and from the spiritual

contacts of life. It has to fight unceasingly against the stupid and inert, often jealous and hostile, mass; and the struggle is full of grave tragedies. It was not individuals, but the masses, who condemned Socrates and Jesus.

Great men are, from an external point of view, rare exceptions. To others they seem merely unintelligible fanatics. In reality they are the normal: the first condition of the ascent of life to a higher stage. They alone protect the interests of the spiritual, open out new prospects and possibilities, and enkindle original life from their fiery souls.

It is owing to these higher souls who rise above the mist of the average that there is a general feeling of dissatisfaction, and that this puts some movement into ordinary life. It is an entire mistake to think that the normal and the average are the same thing. The average is content with what Goethe calls "that mediocrity which is hateful to God and men." Against it Nietzsche flung out the words: "Life will build itself up into the heights with columns and stages. It would look into the far beyond, to the blessed beauties, so it must rise. And because it must rise, it needs stages, it needs men to rise. Rise it will and, in rising, overcome itself."

To this gradation of aims there corresponds a gradation of moods. Here again there may be a whole world between different individuals:

vast distances, heights, and depths may separate them. There runs through the whole of life the antithesis of dependent and independent spirituality : the antithesis of an effort to share the infinity of life and get into touch with the whole, and an effort to reach a comfortable state of equilibrium as quickly as possible. To the one work is a painful necessity with a view to material and social life : to the other it is the very soul and joy of life. Justified as Socialism was in refusing to strain the distance between physical and intellectual work, it does, in point of fact, make a great difference whether we trust merely to material possessions to help men or look to a development of the spiritual life. Step by step we must fight a tendency that "seems to be in favour of an equalising justice, but in reality may easily become an injustice to higher things." Let us not forget that jealousy and envy are ever at work in the average levels of life and that, in the words of Goethe : "The most envious person in the world is the man who thinks everybody his equal." Aristotle also rightly warned us not to treat equals unequally nor to treat unequals equally.

Socialism seeks as near an equality as possible, and it very rightly wishes for this purpose to raise the general level and lift as many as possible to the heights of life and culture, without lowering



these heights. But the nature of things is stronger than the wishes of men. Unwittingly the condition of those who receive becomes the standard of the process, and the state of the whole inevitably sinks. It is impossible to make this effort chiefly in the form of influencing others without suffering some loss oneself. Work that is mainly taken up with instructing and propagating unavoidably loses in quality. Deep original conviction and the instruction of others must be strictly proportioned to each other, and the leading place must be assigned to conviction.

4. In fine, we must not forget to notice a certain contradiction which follows from the innermost feelings connected with the idea of equality. People always speak about equality, but in reality no one means mere equality. He wants *more*, especially more power. The demand of equality is generally inspired by the wish to rise from a lower to a higher level. Those who have something to gain by it are the most zealous for it. When they reach the desired stage, however, they wish to push further. The workers at first set up as their goal the attainment of an equality with the other citizens of the State. This no longer contents them; they want to rule the middle class, and even think it unreasonable that anybody should demur to this. In the end we get the dictatorship of the proletariat—a dictatorship with-

out a dictator. What has now become of the ideal of equality which was the starting point? It is a mere equality in slavery.

5. The real and right meaning of this aiming at equality can only be learned from history. As we have repeatedly seen, it is not the first time that there has been an idea of improving and sustaining life by an appeal to the reason which is immanent in men. There is, clearly, a very broad analogy between the later period of the ancient world and the modern spirit. At that time there were grave struggles, and man turned upon himself and found support in a strong self-consciousness. Ancient and modern thought do not, of course, coincide. The one was the evening of a rich civilisation which had substantially run its course, but our modern culture feels that it is rather the dawn of an age that comes on with all the strength of youth. Ancient thought had not the problem of breaking with a traditional culture; it had only to make things clearer, to collate things, to make them the property of the race and of each individual. The modern mind, on the contrary, found itself confronting a vast mass of facts which were out of harmony with its needs and demands, and it had inevitably to break with these. In the confusion that ensued the humanitarian idea seemed to be the only hope of salvation. This, however, brought on the idea

of equality, and it obtained an immense influence over the souls of men. It was hailed as a great emancipation. It has, in point of fact, done a vast amount in the way of improvement and in suppressing unreason and superstition.

Any man who would fully appreciate the influence of the dream of equality must examine it from this point of view. It was a frame of mind that could hail Rousseau as, in the words of Schiller, "the man who made men out of Christians." Even the literature of our classical period was at first touched by this influence of the movement. Then, however, came the opposite tendency toward the historical, the positive, the individual. People were tired of the intellectualism of the eighteenth century, and they wanted a more satisfying, a more highly coloured, a more original life. They enriched their minds from their own history, and thus they brought about the nationalist movement and all that it achieved, as well as its dangers.

The nationalist idea was at first of a predominantly spiritual character. For some time the question of power, of economic development, etc., was in the background. Even Fichte wanted to restrict Germans as much as possible to their own sphere. World-commerce seemed to him to be dangerous, and he regarded the absence of colonies as an advantage. That could not last



long. The development of life necessitated closer contact with material things. This drove the movement along the lines of realism, and consequently along the line of interests and conflicts. The old idealism disappeared. The idea of power and greatness urged on the nations with demonic energy. Peaceful co-operation gave place to a stern world-rivalry: in the end the terrible world-war from which we have just emerged. By a reaction upon this the humanitarian and equalitarian idea has gained fresh strength; it is supported by the economic struggle of the advancing workers. The idea of human brotherhood came into vogue once more.

But all this has resulted in a state of chaos from which nothing but a superior spiritual force can extricate us. On the one hand we have the spirit of the eighteenth century come to life again, though its fine intellectuality and utilitarianism will never satisfy us in spite of all the improvements and the enrichment of our idea of reality. On the other hand, we find ourselves bound up with the positive, the individual, the actual, which yields us no guiding aims. Socialism coincides with the eighteenth century in its intellectualism and ideal of equality. It is right in so far as it holds up an ideal of co-operation against the prevailing hostility of nations; it is wrong in so far as it

would subject all individuality and historical achievement to these general ideas, and can give no assured substance to its humanitarianism. Hence it is that we are torn to-day between an intellectualism without roots and a naturalist Positivism. The only thing that can remedy this paralysing cleavage is an idealistic Positivism, which promises a more vital substance and a comprehensive goal to the humanitarian idea.

The Socialist ideal is not capable of solving this problem, if it be only because it recognises no independent spiritual world, and is therefore restricted entirely to material things. Hence the ideal is, for all its claim of equality, a much too abstract and superficial scheme of life. This is particularly true of its conception of man himself. Our conception of man must assume an individual character on the basis of a world of action. The fact that on this particular planet there are innumerable beings who have certain special features of their own as distinguished from the animals most nearly related to them is not enough to exact respect and reverence for the idea. It must above all be recognised that by a revolutionary advance of life in this field there has appeared a world of action, promising an even greater development. We have, moreover, to appreciate the special nature and experiences of this province of life. We have to see that there are here two stages

of life, and that the conjunction of them gives rise to difficult problems, but also affords an insight into further depths. Upon those foundations, under those standards, we have to range whatever experience we have had of historical development. Abstract humanitarianism is wrecked upon those problems. When it emptily discusses them, Socialism is out of accord both with the richness of reality and with the historical situation of humanity.

It is just the same in regard to the relation between man and the world. A nation is not a mere aggregation or collection of different men who are enclosed within a common frontier. It needs an inner continuity, a common life of the whole. Unless it has this, the richest resources are undeveloped. Remember the words of Schleiermacher: "It is only the man who knows the mind of his own nation that can find a true joy in the affairs of the race. . . . A nation is a permanent growth in the garden of God. It outlives many a dreary winter which robs it of its green garment, and often of its flowers and fruit." Certainly we want international ideals, but not the kind of internationalism which surrenders all the characteristic features of nations and seeks greatness precisely in this thin-blooded life.

This abstract thought, with its dream of equality, enters into every branch and section of the com-



munity. It has no idea of forming independent groups. It will tolerate no strong middle class, but sees in it only a collection of so many individuals who have no special history and no special tasks. It enables quantity to triumph over quality. It is indifferent to all that is individual, direct, original. Thus we come back always to the conviction that a real equality can be derived only from spiritual contacts, and that the idea of a naturalist equality is self-contradictory.

## § 5

### THE PROBLEM OF SOCIALISATION

THE Socialist ideal reaches its highest point in socialisation. In this it combines the technical power of the economic world and the fundamental qualities of conviction. The modern tendency toward the sovereignty of the individual has experienced a severe check. The tendency now is to give authority and influence to a higher whole. This affects even the mood of the individual: man feels himself helpless and abandoned in face of appalling evils. The economic world is, on account of its sharp antagonisms, especially affected, and it is therefore no wonder that the idea of a stronger concentration of the scattered and often conflicting elements has a considerable and increasing influence. The working class, moreover, has become independent, and this has urged life on to new lines and promises to uplift the entire race. There is unmistakably a great movement in this direction.

But it would be remarkable if a situation which so strongly agitates the minds of men could be easily reconciled with other requirements. There is danger of a narrowing of life. It threatens to bring great and necessary things under the control of a party and thus endanger their rational elements. We will consider these dangers in succession.

1. In the first place there is a serious contradiction in the fundamental idea. The movement for socialisation is supposed to proceed from the whole to the individual, as it is from the whole alone that decisive help can come. But we have already seen that on this point the Socialist ideal falls to pieces. Such a combination as socialisation aims at cannot come from the elements and the connection of these, but only from an independent whole. If there is no such whole, the movement has no solid foundation, and the structure will not stand. But the Socialist ideal has no room for a life from within and from the whole, and therefore the concentration which is intended has no soul, the enterprise has no background. All action is confined to the surface. There are no uplifting spiritual forces to overcome the friction of the elements. This would be fatal to the whole scheme. It might give a semblance of combination, but it cannot give the full reality. At



this point, therefore, the philosophy and the social aim part company.

2. The Socialist philosophy is apt to regard the action of the individual as of no consequence and as the outcome of mere selfishness. In point of fact, not only is the capability of the individual necessary for the physical maintenance and the stimulation of forces in the struggle for life, but it is indispensable, for the full development of souls, to form an independent province of the individual's capacity. That is the only way to make him a living member of reality. A spiritual individuality ought to be regarded as an original source of unlimited vitality. It has a direct value in itself. Aristotle rightly said that nothing so stimulates a man to action as his own property and the object of his affection. Adam Smith's attempt to trace all action to the aims of individuals certainly failed, but his power of awakening and stimulating forces is a fact. To ennoble the rivalry and make it a great help, not only for utilitarian purposes but in the service of beauty, was one of the chief aims of the ancient world ; and our own system of education might well copy it. Can Socialism do this ? Will it not lessen the effectiveness ? Will it not restrict the free movement of individuals and reduce their joy in their work ?

3. Socialisation relies upon the power and justice

of the economic order which it would set up. It expects this order to attract to itself everything that can promote the continuity of work and the spirit of the workers. It is quite right in discarding the older type of idealism, which relied exclusively on the good feeling of individuals. In view of the grave dangers and misunderstandings of our time this would certainly not be enough; we need a vigorous extension of the sphere of collective life. Yet written laws and material institutions will not succeed in touching the deeper part of a man, in winning the soul for the highest purposes. We must bring into action continuous spiritual forces: we have to raise the whole man, the inner man, to a higher level. Thoughts and sentiments must work together to bring about an inner revolution, and to oppose the greater self of the spirit to the lesser self of nature.

In connection with these problems we are again painfully conscious of the shortcomings of Socialism in confusing higher and lower things, spirit and nature. In its practical application the higher features are not kept together, and do not work by the force of a common world. As an illustration we may take the distinction between a lower and a higher type in sympathy and love. Sympathy as a natural sentiment has no uplifting moral value. Kant and other

thinkers have justly pointed out that the common type of sympathy is casual and incidental, whereas the kind of sympathy urged in the religions of India is quite a different thing ; it is based upon a special relation to universal life and derives great power from the development of this relation. It is the same with Christianity. What is usually called "love" is, as a rule, closely connected with a lower natural impulse, and does little for life as a whole. But what is called, in a special sense, Christian charity is rooted in the power of a creative world-will, which brings individuals together with an uplifting action and intimately connects them. When men's aims and conduct have not some such connecting and uplifting bond, all our laws and institutions may have only a superficial and external effect. However valuable and indispensable the affairs of the material world may be, they cannot properly attain their end except in connection with an invisible world.

Socialism, with its rejection of religion, or its declaration that religion is a private concern, is particularly unfitted to derive advantage from the stimulation it affords, and to build up an independent inner life. Hence, while its scheme of socialisation may hold men together externally, it cannot fill them with the spirit of love and thus bind them intimately to each other.



4. Moreover, Socialism takes too narrow a view of the complex web of human life. It ignores the many differences and antitheses which are found throughout life, and on the reciprocal action of which the full success of life depends. Let us consider the chief points in this connection.

(a) Life does not treat man as a particular piece in a continuous mass, but it requires for his development some sort of separateness, a certain distance from others. He must have a sphere of his own: he must not only be associated, but dissociated. Goethe was right when he said: "Every living thing makes its own atmosphere about it" and "Distinctiveness evokes distinctiveness." This combination of attraction and repulsion gives us a special type of quality; it has nothing whatever to do with professional class-consciousness, but is essentially required for the full characterisation of life. It is a lower type of character that tries to blend the various streams of life. All great thinkers from the earliest times have been opposed to this. Aristotle considered dependence upon other men mere imitation of others, a sign of an inferior character. German humanism at its height was strongly opposed to it, and created, with great energy, independent spheres of life. "Be everything to thyself, or thou art nothing," said Fichte. This separateness and individuality of life may be

exaggerated, as it was amongst the Romantists, but it is absolutely necessary if we are to have independent creative work. The socialisation plan has no room for it.

(b) The course of our inquiry has led us to the relation of the individual to his social environment, and has thus raised the problem of the psychology of the crowd. This problem has been discussed so much for thousands of years that we need not go deeply into it here. We will deal only with a few points in regard to which Socialism is in conflict with the demands of philosophy. It appeals confidently to collective reason and the importance of "public opinion," but it ignores the fact that it is not a belief in the reason of a mass of men, but a belief in a spirituality that is active in the human realm, which justifies this appeal. It is only contact with some spiritual requirement of the historical situation that gives weight to public opinion and makes it superior to the varying moods of individuals. Of itself it has not the slightest guarantee of truth.

The mere summing up of opinions does not make reason. That able student of human nature, Tocqueville, rightly said that passions usually increase with the number of the individuals which share them, and that a majority is in a condition of progressive self-deification. It is a re-

markable thing that in spite of thousands of years of experience the question seems to be still open. Every utterance of public opinion is hailed as an indisputable truth. It is especially prone to treat as permanent requirements of human nature certain ideas which are in harmony with particular tendencies. That, for instance, democracy meets only special sections and duties of political life was pointed out long ago, with convincing clearness, by Plato; yet innumerable people still regard it as the last word of political wisdom and would subject the whole of life to it.

Hegel was certainly right when he said that the only thing we can learn from history is that neither rulers nor peoples have ever learned anything from it.

The relation of the social average to the great personalities of historic life has already been considered. They are by no means mere megaphones for their fellows. They are not mere summaries of contemporary life. They bring about a radical uplift and advance, a return from unstable wavering between alternatives to a solid and clearly conceived reality. Hegel was wrong when he said: "He who utters the wishes of his age, tells them to it and realises them, is the great man of his time." The work of the great man is not confined to teaching people the content of life, as intellectuals say, for in that case



there would be no answer to the question in what the will of an age consists, or whether an age as a whole can have any will. Is it not usually driven by dark and confused impulses until some outstanding personality sets a limit to its vagaries and gives definite aims to his fellows ?

(c) In fine, the individual has not only to act within society : he may be in opposition to it and have to wage a stern struggle against it. This happens particularly when the general human condition no longer satisfies the life that appears on special heights and streams from them ; when some inner uplift, even a revolution, is necessary. It is due to a conviction that there is an independent spirituality at work in men, but that in the ordinary course of things it is entangled in various relations to nature and society, and it is only on the highest level that it succeeds in attaining an entirely independent and victorious spirituality, and can thus give life a firm support and an indisputable value. From this comes the loftiness of the spiritual creative power, of the inner revelations, which we have in the great founders of religions and in great artists and thinkers of the type of Plato. Their task is not merely to do something great amongst men, but to make something great out of men. That was the work of personalities who were

firm and secure in their spiritual contacts. They were appointed to reach the heights of their own nature in detachment from society and thus to give complete independence to their creative work. Only in their case could there be a union of profound isolation with an intimate connection with the whole: a struggle against ordinary human nature which was victorious even when to the outward eye they seemed to fail. They lifted life above the utilitarian level and turned the useful into a blessing. As Kant said: "Everything, even the highest, becomes small in the hands of men when they apply the idea of it to their own use." That Socialism, with its utilitarian tendency, knows nothing of these problems, though they are indispensable to humanity as a whole, is only another proof of its limitations.

5. Socialism has every right to press the idea of the whole and deny that it splits the community into atoms, but it narrows the idea of the whole in a lamentable fashion and thus divides humanity itself. It would represent the whole race, and it certainly often does so very sincerely. But its identification of one particular party with the whole community is bound to lead to serious misunderstandings; and that is what happens in Socialist circles. The party considers itself humanity; it usurps the position that belongs to the whole. In this way the race is divided

and rent in a way to which we find a parallel only in the ecclesiastical fanaticism which divides men into believers and unbelievers, and takes no account of anything else. Belief becomes party-belief, a mere confession of faith in the program of the party. In its narrower circles the movement recognises no right, freedom, truth, or goodwill outside of itself; the others, the "reactionaries," have only the opposite. Everything is staked upon a sheer alternative: all compromise and adjustment is rejected; the whole race is divided into friend and foe, worker and drone, proletariat and capitalists. The individual is from early years impregnated with very narrow views, and is taught to regard every problem as solved.

For the race as a whole this division into separate and irreconcilable worlds is very injurious. Germany has already had painful experience of the harm that is done by this sectarian treatment, this substitution of members of the party for citizens of the State. It means that every institution and measure has to be adapted to the interests of the manual workers. Freedom gives way to might. For true freedom it is essential that a man can put himself into the frame of mind of others and converse quite impartially with them, instead of confining himself to his own circle. The chief root of this defect is the



lack of a broad and uplifting conception of the life of man as a whole: the inability to rise above controversy to genuine truth and serve it in preference to the interests of ordinary human nature. When this power is lacking, there is an unavoidable division into parties, and no amount of zeal for socialisation can prevent men from drifting apart.

6. Finally, there is a good deal of contradiction in the details of the ideal offered to us. There is, in the first place, a contradiction in the fundamental idea of Social Democracy, which tries to combine two diametrically opposite tendencies. Democracy and Socialism lie too far apart to be combined: the one must precede the other. Modern thought had for its leading idea to develop life from individual centres and base all institutions upon their will and work. In its clearest form it brought about the eighteenth-century ideal of a State with freedom and law, restricting the interference of the community as much as possible and looking to the free activity of individuals for salvation. This gave the lead to the democratic movement, and it did many valuable things.

Socialism, on the contrary, takes its stand decisively on the idea of the whole. Its main concern is not the freedom of individuals, but the collective welfare. The individual has to submit himself and his personal aims to this common

welfare ; he has to look to it for both the standard and the guide of his efforts. It is absolutely necessary to reconcile these tendencies. The freedom of individuals and the unity of the whole are both indispensable for the spiritual good of the race. But they cannot be directly reconciled on the surface of life. They can be combined only by a considerable uplifting and unification of the race. Social Democracy as a party has no chance of doing this. Its two tendencies cannot develop without encroaching upon each other and restricting each other, so that there cannot logically be a harmonious social structure. The logical consequence, both for life and the State, is merely a series of sharp antagonisms.

How deeply this affects the fabric of life may be shown by considering the question of strikes. From the democratic point of view the strike is an unlimited right on the part of citizens. Whether the use of the weapon on any particular occasion profits the strikers, or how far a strike injures the entire economic life of the community, is, from the democratic point of view, a matter for the judgment and good feeling of individuals. They alone are responsible. But the man who is chiefly concerned about the good of the whole and a possible injury to it cannot grant this unqualified liberty and right to the individual. He seeks some legal means of meeting the danger ;

he prefers the Socialist idea to the democratic. There is thus a contradictory state of things. If the democratic tendency wins, Socialism has to be content with a subordinate position; if the Socialist tendency prevails, the democratic movement has to come to terms with it.

The Social Democracy of our days tries to occupy an untenable middle position. It is on a very steep slope. There must be either a liberty which dissolves the common life into a number of atoms and destroys the structure of the State, or a collective control which logically leads to complete Communism and destroys all liberty. A contradictory situation of this sort may be helped for a time by a compromise, but this cannot inspire a common will or bring about a firm structure of the whole. In reality there is no room for an idea of the whole or of freedom in an order of things which restricts itself to mere existence and experience. Reality requires greater breadth and originality than is possible in such an order. That is the only way to adjust the difficulty.

In Germany the confusion is especially bad on account of the occurrence of three great political tendencies, which are only held together by the parliamentary system. We cannot here enter into a detailed criticism of this system. There is no doubt that in England it had special



conditions, and was able to do much good, but to make it the normal type of constitutional life has done a great deal of harm. In Germany we have political Catholicism, in the Centre Party, added to the distinction between Social Democracy and democracy. The vast distance between the ideals of the three is clear to everybody; their practical, and not merely their speculative, views are diametrically opposed to each other. This is very clearly seen in connection with religion. Social Democracy is indifferent, if not hostile, to religion. The only reality it concerns itself about is of this world. The most it can do for religion is to tolerate it; it cannot recognise its independent value. Democracy may easily develop a spiritual world in the individual as a being endowed with freedom, but it throws this being upon its own resources and rejects the idea of subjection. Catholicism places the visible world under the power of an invisible world and binds the individual firmly to a visible order like the Church.

Thus the three political orders meet and clash with each other. There is no possibility of adjustment unless each of them is willing to withhold its fundamental convictions in the field of politics, and, like Social Democracy, declare religion to be a man's "private business." For the Catholic, however, it is a first principle that

religion is anything but a private matter. How can there possibly be any reconciliation of these fundamental contradictions? Must it not end in a collection of regulations which have no inner connection with each other? Can there be any collective will in such a situation? And will not the State itself in such a case fall under the power of parties and their temporary tendencies? The more the consequences of the situation disclose themselves the lower the State is bound to sink, the looser its inner structure will become, and the less moral power will be derived from it.

It is clear, then, that the idea of socialisation is full of difficulties, and that it sinks deeper into them the farther it proceeds in the reconstruction of life. We have before us a great, an indispensable, idea, but Socialism cannot carry it out. Its standard is too narrow. By restricting itself to the visible world it falls under the power of parties and forgets man as a whole. Experience clearly shows us that Socialism only leads to trouble in its own camp when it tries to work out its scheme in detail. New parties arise constantly out of the old. The mere reason of man cannot lay the spectres which it has raised. Each particular plan of the whole regards itself as superior as long as it is in opposition, but the moment it attempts constructive thinking, it finds itself confronted by a new opposition. We are

threatened with a terrible chaos, and in the end the force of some strong personality may have to be brought in to put an end to it. What becomes then of the inner unity of the race and of the realm of peace and love? Socialisation certainly presents problems enough. What it lacks is the power to solve them.



## § 6

### A CRITICISM OF ECONOMISM

IN the case of economism there is question of the value of the economic life for the race. It is inevitable that there should be great changes of the old order. This order, which was mainly fixed by the teaching of Aristotle, was closely connected with a structure of society that we have passed beyond in the course of our evolution. The appreciation of spiritual things which inspired the old order was determined by the existence of slavery. It was only because the greater part of the race was in a state of servitude that concern about material things could be regarded as secondary. The matter appears in a very different light when the slaves become free and independent workers; when the movement is rather from below to above than the contrary, and thus entirely new claims make their appearance. The rise of this question gives great prominence to the economic factor, and is bound to shift the centre of gravity of the collec-

tive life. It is no longer a sign of an idealist disposition to make light of the economic question.

Moreover, the old order was too rigid, too inaccessible to large changes. The new order wants to bring men and things into a state of suspense, and to oppose to every limitation the idea of indefinite progress. That stiffened man's self-consciousness, and gave more confidence to his conduct. New resources were discovered. Theory took the lead. New forces were disclosed.

In fine, the technical and industrial development has entirely changed the character of economic work. It produced appalling problems which it left to our age and the future to solve. Whatever we decide in this field seems to settle the fate of the race. The situation is, therefore, one of great strain, and we quite understand that every available force is summoned in the attempt to find a remedy. But the Socialist ideal tried to put the spiritual and material, the things of sense and the things above sense, on a common footing of appreciation. It hoped to give life more power and more continuity in this way.

We have to question this idea of the relation of the material and spiritual. Socialism is quite right when it refuses to treat economic things as mere means to an end, and assigns them a value of their own. They influence the whole process of life. They provide new powers, new stimula-

tions, new objects. But to recognise this is not at all the same thing as to put the material and the spiritual on a common level. Throughout our whole life and conduct we feel the antithesis of mere existence and a world of action, of dependent and independent spirituality. There can be no question of making them equal: one must lead, the other follow. It is one of the limitations of Socialism that in its economism it knows no such thing as independent spirituality, or treats it merely as an appendage of the material. Hence even in the best cases Socialists must put material prosperity in the first place. This means a lowering of the standard of things which require an independent spirituality, and an absence of independent contacts.

Here we have the fundamental error of this naturalistic Monism. It regards the psychic life as merely a process in individual minds, and recognises no connection through a common life. When it thus confines its attention to individuals, it can justly claim that the individual life is closely associated with others, and that even the frontiers between animal and human life are not rigid. But it fails to appreciate the profound fact that in the case of man the psychic life does not consist of separate points; it runs together into a common life. This common life has an extraordinarily rich content, and it has



quite different features from those of nature. It is this connectedness that makes history and society in the strict human sense possible; it alone gives rise to conceptual language and culture, and facilitates the branching of culture into the independent provinces of law, morals, art, and science. It is, in fact, only in this soil that an independent economic life is possible; for there is a vital difference between the mere natural impulse to assert oneself in the struggle for life and the effort to bring about a common economic order. The main idea of the latter presupposes a spiritual and independent activity. The mere clash of natural impulses could never lead to the construction of an economic life.

Naturalistic economism shares with materialistic naturalism the defect of treating natural existence as the chief world, and then applying to its intellectual adaptation powers of thought which are unintelligible within the bounds of nature. This contradiction in theory leads to contradiction in action. Concern about the material world cannot be regarded by a spiritual being as the main object of life. His efforts must be directed to an autonomous purpose and value somewhere; they must be self-contained. The acquiring of an unlimited amount of material things cannot in the end satisfy a man. Hence even the economic life has to be included in a

larger life if it is to bring a man happiness and not unhappiness. Outwardly the desire may have no limits whatever, but there is a subjective limit. Concern about the means of life cannot be the substance of life.

The cares and complications which come of the wild struggle for life can only be endured when a man is full of spiritual interests and has in his mind no grave moral difficulties. This was the idea of the eighteenth century. It made life dependent above all on the general intelligence, and from its insight and benevolence it expected everything. As regards insight, we have already said enough about the unsatisfactory condition of the average man. But there is no doubt that he is equally unsatisfactory morally. Every profound thinker has taken these moral complications very seriously. Even those thinkers who in their philosophy zealously contended for the supremacy of reason, such as Aristotle and Leibnitz, could not refrain from sharp censures when they contemplated the condition of men. Different ages have expressed these censures differently, but there is a general agreement.

The thinkers of the ancient world demanded a firm standard of judgment and a harmonious development of all a man's powers, a tranquillity even in the midst of active work. They found the great mass of men full of insatiable greed

and constantly changing. Christianity declared that charity is the controlling power of human life, but all its leaders bitterly deplored the lack of charity, the great indifference of men to each other, the destructive power of selfishness. Modern times had the ambition to develop every power and enable all men to share in the advance of life ; but the admission had to be made that the average man inertly opposed every attempt to stimulate him and could only be moved by artificial means. It can be shown to demonstration that the more any thinker reflected on the moral task, the more painfully he felt the distance of the average man from the ideal. That was the case of Kant, for instance, with his insistence on truthfulness and integrity.

Now what has economism, with its emphasis on material conditions, to say on this question ? On Socialist principles it casts the whole blame for our moral condition on the perverse and corrupt social conditions. But how did it come about that a nature endowed with insight and benevolence created such conditions ? If the conditions are so bad, their author cannot have been very good. And if men are of their own nature defective and contradictory, a change in their conditions will not help them much. Man is always human ; no new constitution will deliver him from the faults of his own nature. The character of the



constitution matters, of course. It makes a good deal of difference whether a man lives in a healthy or an unhealthy social atmosphere. But the internal and external must work together. It is by no means the atmosphere alone that determines the spiritual condition. Christianity arose in unfortunate conditions, but it did not give in to its surroundings: partly at least, it overcame them.

Every civilisation has had its special difficulties. A certain self-destruction is seen unmistakably in the course of history. Great waves break upon men and races, but man is not merely passive under them. In virtue of the originality of the spiritual life, in which each individual may share, and in virtue of the influence of an independent and triumphant spirituality, he can begin again and find in the depths of his own soul something superior to all environment and tradition. Our condition is not so simple or so restricted as this Socialist economism supposes. Even the life of the community is more varied and more alive than Socialism represents it to be. It contains many levels and currents, and these may provide new impulses and stimulations, and thus affect individuals.

Let us not forget, in fine, that the predominance of the economic may assume different forms. There is capitalism, with its terrible power and

its insatiable cupidity. There is on the opposite side a constant condition of dissatisfaction, envy, and jealousy, which hampers, and may entirely prevent, the inward advance of life. The main thing is always the moral problem, the state of men's souls. Whatever we may say about the historical position of Christianity, we must never forget that it grasped very zealously the problem of the moral renovation of the race and sought to give a firm support and an inner harmony to a distracted age. Socialist economism is apt to underrate this. It is so disposed because it regards as a matter of course the constructive influence which came to men from Christianity. But we have just now a painful consciousness that it is not a matter of course ; that it requires powerful forces and earnest effort.

Not only is economism apt to underrate the inner tasks and perplexities of men, as we have seen, but its ideal of happiness is too superficial. Its main object is subjective comfort, pleasure. This need not be directly sensuous ; it may assume spiritual forms. But unless pleasure depends upon some real content, it soon becomes sensuous and vague. Even when it is attained, it leads in the end to a feeling of emptiness and tedium. It makes upon life a great claim that must be satisfied, a driving impulse that goes beyond the

mere individual and shows that man is a cosmic being, a sharer in infinite life.

That should be our attitude in regard to the main feature of human activity. It is work. The word, however, has many meanings, and the use of it has led to a good deal of confusion. We have only to think of work which is imposed upon us by the pressure of the needs of physical or economic subsistence, and then of our inner relation to an object, of a complete psychic disposition for it, an adoption of it into one's own province of life. We must clearly distinguish between the work imposed upon us and this self-chosen work : work directed to without and work directed to within. In the first case we are indifferent to the object ; perhaps we hate it. In the other case it grows with our inner life. In the one case one strives to avoid the work as much as possible ; in the other it is welcomed, and becomes a thing of joy, clearly distinguished from any other pleasure by the relation to the object. It is only free work that makes an appeal to a man and relieves him from the feeling of compulsion. It alone can permeate a man's whole life.

Within the psychic life itself we have two stages. All genuine work embraces the object, and binds the psychic power to it, but it makes a difference whether the object has merely certain attractions for us or can be adopted fully into



one's own life. It is only in the latter case that work becomes creative, and produces new reality : here alone can life find rest in itself and at the same time attain to something higher. Working and creating do not mean any sort of selection from a confused and vague collection of things ; they are independent members of a comprehensive whole. This enables man, when he chooses his task, to conceive the whole as his own concern and share the uplift of life that proceeds from it. Happiness is not a matter of individual elements, but a vast source of life upon which every man may draw, and which he may regard as his own possession. It is one of the chief defects of modern times that we have far too much compulsory, and far too little free, work. Hence we find no true happiness, no inner contact with reality as a whole.

We have seen enough about the mighty problems which confront our age. Work, which had a more personal character in earlier times, has lost this more and more owing to the intellectual and technical enslavement of the forces of nature and the development of the factory system. It has created gigantic industrial complexes which bring man more and more within their power. This leads to immense achievements and to an increasingly complex division of labour, but the soul remains empty, and its thirst for happiness

is unsatisfied. It was the great aim and the chief duty of Socialism to satisfy this desire and to strengthen the souls of men. But here again it transpires that it is much easier to formulate problems than to solve them. The antithesis of the ideal of work and the ideal of happiness remains. Socialism means by soul merely a man's powers. We saw that this is not enough, and only lands us in fresh complications. On the other hand work presses its claims upon us. It seems to us a demoniac force that we would shake off, but we cannot do this without gravely injuring, if not destroying, civilisation.

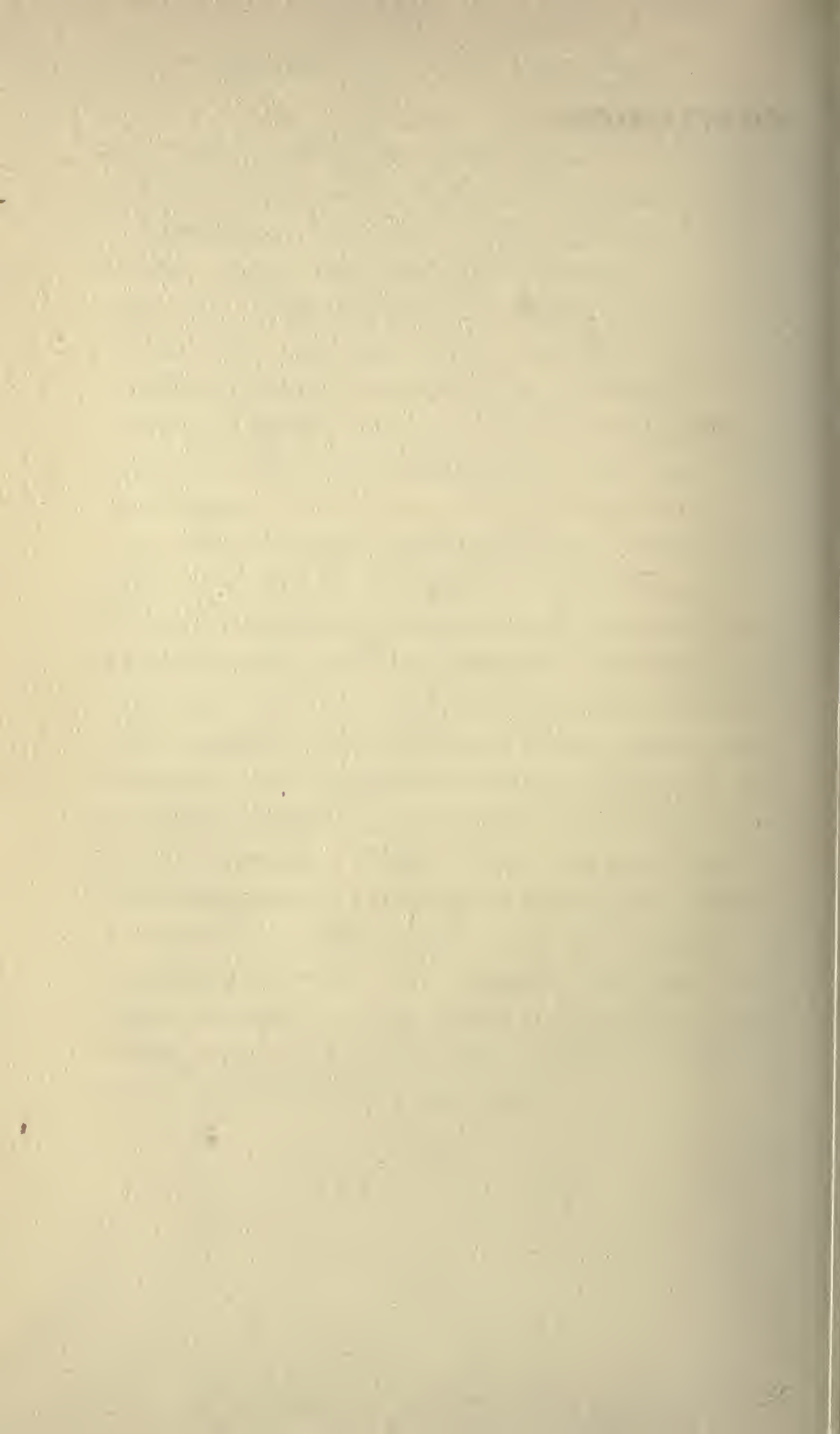
It must therefore be a matter of deep concern to all earnest and thoughtful people to devise every possible means of ending this conflict which distracts the race. For this we need social institutions and regulations. Here more than anywhere else we need wise statesmanship: a mind that can see deep into the nature of things and does not shrink from the most drastic means of bridging the gulf between the soul and work. On the other hand, however, human nature itself must be deepened. Superhuman forces must be brought to life, and on the strength of these we must bring about a spiritual—not merely a religious—reformation. This alone can provide an adequate counterpoise to the weight of material interests.

It is at all events clear that modern life has two poles and turns upon these: a spiritual culture, which has the power of overcoming the antagonism of work and welfare, and an economic culture, which can meet the demands of nature and the social collectivity. The great problem of our day is to bring these two poles into harmonious relation to each other and reconcile the conflicting points of view. In this spiritual force must take the lead, and link up our aims with the whole.

In fine, it is not a question merely of economic prosperity, but of the good of man as a whole. The chief concern is not personal happiness, but an inner uplift and transformation. As individuals and even as social units we generally seek our own happiness, but when we reflect we see that this desire of happiness is only a means to lift us to the heights of our nature and make more of us inwardly. What often happens in the individual probably holds good also for the whole: a man often attains, not what he sought, but something greater. He sought happiness, and found a new life and being. As Goethe said: "Saul, son of Kis, went forth to seek his father's asses, and he found a kingdom."



# CONCLUSION



## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

ALL the various points that we have hitherto considered may be summed up in one question : Can Socialism as an ideal embrace the whole life of man, supply it with the necessary objects and powers, fully develop man's capabilities, and satisfy the desire of happiness ?

It believed and hoped that it would do this by setting a man free from all non-human entanglements and putting him on the ground of experience. It was convinced that the problem can be fully solved by the combination of individual forces, by society, especially by an economic collectivity. All other questions merged in this. All other matters were coloured by this. A realm was established which promised to meet all man's legitimate aspirations.

To these questions we have to give a clear and unambiguous answer. We reply in the negative. Our point of view is not that of the politician or the political economist, but the philosopher. The



philosopher alone can tell what will happen to man as a whole, and inwardly, if the Socialist ideal is fully realised.

We put our opinions under six main headings. In each case we found that Socialism raises formidable problems and provides valuable stimulation, but that it cannot solve the problem of life. Its treatment is far too narrow, too summary, too partisan. It overlooks the depths and complexities of human nature, and its action could affect only part of the surface of life. Let us again glance at these points.

1. Socialism would embrace the whole movement of life and give more unity to our efforts. The problem is inevitable; but the solution offered to us does not go beyond a limited surface and a particular level. It ignores the deeper movements and the antagonisms which confront us.

2. Socialism makes man the centre of all effort, but its conception of human nature is too external. It separates man from reality as a whole, and, on account of this separation, it is unable to give his life a meaning and value. It is only a connection of life with the life of the whole that can give it substance.

3. Socialism would make life entirely a thing of the present. But it does not attain to a living present. It falls under the power of the passing moment. It has no genuine history.

4. Socialism would bring about complete equality. But it cannot do this without destroying the whole structure of society, and, if it is thoroughly consistent, sinking into a condition without spirituality or culture. The equality it aims at is very apt to become injustice.

5. Socialism would bind men more closely together by socialisation, and enable them to do higher things. But as it has no inner power to communicate, the whole must fall apart and end in a struggle of each against all.

6. Socialism treats the economic task as the greatest of all. It cannot do this without gravely injuring and stunting man's nature as a whole, and particularly his inner life. The external would dominate the internal.

In sum, there is here no right content of life and no real happiness. The whole thing is, in spite of all that has been done, confined to the surface. The only guide of conduct is utility. A combination of superior intelligence and sense-impulse is to constitute a complete man. Intellectualism and sensualism together are to control life and rob it of its soul. This theory suffers from a great exaggeration of the importance of the economic means which are provided by nature and our condition, and of the moral faculty. Man is thought to be naturally good and noble. It is evil conditions that are responsible for the un-

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happy state of the race. That was the idea of Rousseau and the French Revolution, and it is also the idea of Socialism. The coincidence was bound to give rise to powerful movements and fiery passions, but it leads to an inner degeneration. What is the use of it all, if there is no inward life, if we are concerned only about material existence ?

With all these objections and censures we must not fail to appreciate what Socialism has done. It has, in the first place, directed upon our conditions a vigorous and largely justified criticism. It has, in particular, made the economic problem an important part of life and shown how significant its consequences are. It has recognised the independence of the workers as an essential element of humanity, and this is bound to have a powerful influence upon the whole of life. Beyond all these services, there are very many Socialists who wish to see a new life inspired : more love, more unity, more happiness. The strength of this aspiration must be considered by any man who would understand Socialism rightly. Yet this aspiration cannot be fulfilled unless it is based upon larger contacts than those which Socialism affords. If its ideal is to sacrifice all that could be gained from further contacts, a spiritual impoverishment is inevitable. In point of fact, our whole spiritual atmosphere is steeped in historic work, though it is not yet recognised.



That Socialism—taking the word in its broadest sense—is now a world-power is experienced daily and hourly by every nation, at least indirectly. There were two chief reasons why it attained this power, and the coincidence of these has a great effect upon the actual crisis. Civilisation has not at present any comprehensive and uplifting aim. In earlier times religion gave it such an aim; then it received one from intellectual and artistic culture. Realism then came to power, and under its influence life divided into particular currents, many of which may be effective in detail, but the general effect is to divide, not to unite.

Upon this restless age fell the great economic development: the radical transformation of work and the appearance of the economic problem with all its antagonisms. This problem now dominates the situation. It has dragged the whole race out of its orbit. It has tried to put life on a new foundation. It has raised its objects to the rank of objects of man as a whole. This aim mixes right and wrong things inseparably together. Up to a point it is right, but it becomes wrong when it thrusts aside the question of man as a whole, and substitutes for him man as a worker, especially a manual worker.

That makes the standard of life much too narrow. To save the breadth and freedom of humanity we have to fight vigorously against this threat of

narrowness. The race must make a great struggle for self-preservation. We have to decide whether man as a whole is to be the ideal or whether he is to be sacrificed : whether he can assimilate the present situation, or whether it will destroy him. The danger is not so much in the spiritual content of Socialism, which is, nevertheless, undoubtedly limited and one-sided, as in the absence of a positive aim of life, a comprehensive and uplifting ideal. We have none at present. The future must have one, and it must at the same time properly adjust the relations of economic and spiritual activity ; it must put the man above the worker. We shall not succeed without a thorough strengthening and deepening of life, a spiritual reformation. Personal enthusiasm cannot help us. We must be acted upon by higher spiritual forces before there will be any great change in us. Perhaps we are entering upon a new religious epoch that will give us inner support and substance. At all events, the main thing is our spiritual self-preservation, accompanied by happiness. Man will find that by his spiritual maintenance he is superior to all political and social problems. Once awakened to spirituality, he will never part with it. His spiritually free nature cannot tolerate the compulsion of Socialism. While, however, we hope for the ultimate triumph of man as a whole, there may be mighty struggles and revolutions before

it is attained. The immediate outlook has little hope in it. We have reached a fateful turn, and we need all our resources to decide.

There have been large transfers of power and of value. A powerful movement has arisen, and the feelings of whole nations as well as individuals are deeply stirred. But we have no containing and uplifting forces to provide a counterpoise. There is no substance in our life to direct our energies. Serious changes threaten man as a whole. The thousand-year-old content of society is in ruins, and elementary forces are let loose. The movement which formerly proceeded from above to below now runs in the opposite direction. That has caused immense changes. Man's position in regard to the totality of things is altered. He is uncertain about himself and his fundamental relation to reality. The bearers of moral as well as religious life are tottering.

In this respect our age is a tragic spectacle. Modern man would free himself from all entanglements and rely upon his own powers. He thought that he could do everything by closer combination and a full development of his faculties on the level of ordinary existence. With feverish energy he sought to build up a tower as high as the heavens. Already the various nations are in confusion. With all their talk of unity and equality, men fall wider apart than ever. We see clearly the



limitations of our race. Enthusiasm for humanity is dying down. It must soon be decided whether our social order and civilisation are, or are not, strong enough to bring about an inward unity, to engender the needful spiritual forces, to find a remedy for the psychic isolation of the race as well as of individuals. If not, they must perish, and they deserve to perish. The spiritual world itself is safe enough, and stands above all changes and human feverishness, as the stars shine high above the earth. It is not impossible that the race must actually learn by a crass denial of the existence of independent spirituality and the destruction of all invisible contacts how vitally it needs them. Meantime, let each faithfully do his duty and keep the totality of things firmly in view.

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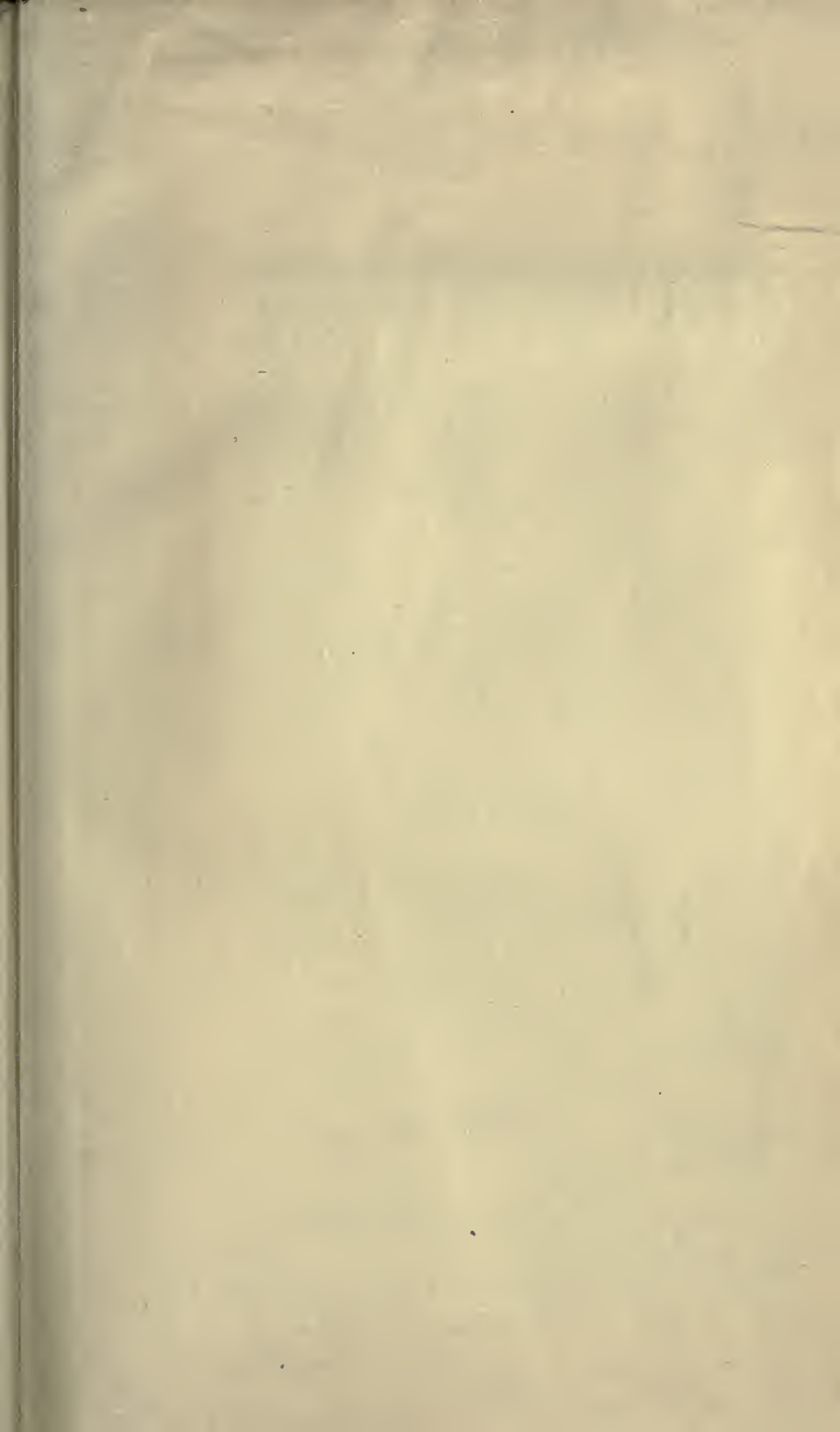
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